United Nations S/PV.4331

Security Council

Fifty-sixth year

Provisional

4331st meeting

Tuesday, 19 June 2001, 4 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Chowdhury	(Bangladesh)
Members:	China	Mr. Shen Guofang
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Ireland	Mr. Ryan
	Jamaica	Miss Durrant
	Mali	Mr. Touré
	Mauritius	Mr. Gokool
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Granovsky
	Singapore	Ms. Lee
	Tunisia	Mr. Cherif
	Ukraine	Mr. Krokhmal
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

Presentation of the report of the Security Council mission to Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

01-41608 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 4.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

Presentation of the report of the Security Council mission to Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Yugoslavia, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Šahović (Yugoslavia), took a seat at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them photocopies of the report of the Security Council mission to Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/2001/600.

I shall now, in my capacity as head of the Security Council mission to Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, make a presentation of the report of the mission.

It is with great honour that I present to the Security Council the report of the Council mission on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). The mission visited Pristina, Mitrovica and Belgrade from 16 to 18 June. Since the report was finalized only this morning upon the return of the mission last night, the English version is currently available as a working text. Versions in other languages will be available first thing in the morning tomorrow.

This mission has been significant in a number of ways. First, all members of the Security Council joined in the mission. Then, this was also the first mission led by the Council President. It will be recalled that the first Council mission to Kosovo, in April 2000, did not include Belgrade in its itinerary. This mission had good discussions this time in Belgrade with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia leadership. The mission also had an unscheduled but substantive and important meeting with President Putin of the Russian Federation.

The Council report is divided into four sections. The first section lays down the terms of reference of the mission; the second sets out its composition; and the third is on its activities and contains a summary of the meetings. The final section has the findings.

The programme of the mission was tightly scheduled and very intense. The mission undertook a series of meetings with the key actors in Kosovo and interacted with the representatives of various communities. In Belgrade, the mission had meetings with President Koštunica of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Foreign Minister Svilanovic and Interior Minister Zivkovic. We had an opportunity to hold in-depth discussions with various people of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Kosovo Force (KFOR), in addition to those with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Hans Haekkerup, and KFOR Commander Lieutenant General Skiaker. We believe that the intensity of the visit and the compactness of the programme, accompanied by the wealth of inputs received, yielded very good results in terms of the objectives of the mission, continuing the trend set up by the Council in its mission to Kosovo last year.

The situation in Kosovo is complex, as is the process of implementing resolution 1244 (1999). The task of UNMIK is enormous. With the election in Kosovo, scheduled for November, approaching fast, its task has become arduous. The UNMIK and KFOR leaderships are deeply engaged in addressing the volatile situation there. We have been encouraged to see the spirit of the staff of the international civil and security presence in Kosovo. We have been impressed by the teamwork and mutual collaboration.

In the section on the activities of the mission, the report presents the details which I would recommend for the Council's close attention.

UNMIK has made some considerable achievements and is also facing many challenges as it marks its second anniversary. The major challenge for all is to encourage all communities, particularly the Kosovo Serb community, to participate in both registration and elections. An important element is UNMIK's developing dialogue with the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and efforts to facilitate the latter's engagement of the Kosovo Serb community to be part of the process. The Special Representative has now met with President Koštunica four times and several times with Foreign Minister Svilanovic. One of UNMIK's first priorities was the establishment of an office in Belgrade, which has now been accomplished.

The mission, in its interaction with the ethnic communities, could sense their clear desire for a return to normalcy, the restitution of law and order, and economic reconstruction. The mission made use of all opportunities to send a strong message to the ethnic communities to reject all violence, to promote stability, safety and security and to cooperate fully with UNMIK in the implementation of resolution 1244 (1999). We are pleased to say that the mission's message was taken seriously.

The mission has seen the preparations for Kosovo-wide elections in November, with particular emphasis on the inclusion of all communities, with the notable exception of the Kosovo Serbs. The Kosovo Turkish community, which hardly participated in last year's municipal elections, is ready to participate this time.

Some progress has been made in the area of Kosovo Serb return. At the beginning of this month, the Interim Administrative Council endorsed a statement of principle on their return.

In Kosovo the mission met with Russian President Putin, who was visiting the region. A fruitful exchange of views on a wide range of pertinent issues in the region took place. This included the means for establishing a multi-ethnic Kosovo; strategies for combating extremism and terrorism; and conditions for the return of the Kosovo Serb community and its participation in the forthcoming Kosovo-wide elections.

On the last day, the mission, accompanied by the Special Representative, met in Belgrade with President Koštunica of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, its Foreign Minister and the Interior Minister. The increasing dialogue between UNMIK and the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was welcomed by the mission. The discussions focused on issues of mutual concern, including security, the return of Kosovo Serbs, the constitutional framework and elections, as well as the need for confidence-building measures.

The mission underlined that participation in the political process was a prerequisite to progress in these areas of mutual concern and called on the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to assist in reinforcing the message with the Kosovo Serb community.

During its visit the mission made a number of important observations and findings. The report of the mission mentions them in detail, and I am going to mention only a few of them here. This is in accordance with the terms of reference of the mission.

We found that UNMIK has made considerable progress in implementing Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) in the two years since its establishment, although there remains a lot to be done. UNMIK has now reached a critical stage in the implementation of its mandate, and continued effectiveness requires a major effort by UNMIK, KFOR and UNMIK police, backed up by close attention from the Security Council and the sustained input of resources from the international community.

While the mission was left in no doubt that strong reservations exist, not least in Belgrade, about the difficulties involved in taking forward elections in Kosovo on the basis of the constitutional framework, it also recognizes that the status quo is unacceptable and that a political process has to be taken forward in accordance with Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

The mission underlined that elections will enhance the democratic process in Kosovo and the stability of the region and stressed that secure conditions for the election should be ensured. The participation of all communities in the elections, the return of refugees and displaced persons and their participation in elections should be encouraged.

The current political process is crucial to combating extremism and encouraging moderates on all sides. Key to the success of this process is the active

engagement and participation of all communities. The mission supports UNMIK's efforts for the creation of a multi-ethnic Kosovo, which remains one of the main challenges.

The mission welcomes the establishment by the Special Representative of pillar I, relating to law and order and justice, and key legislation to combat organized crime, illegal weapons possession and terrorism.

The mission recommends that a formal request be sent to KFOR to regularly provide detailed information, including that pertaining to the origin, type and quantity of weapons seized, in order to enable the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1160 (1998) to pursue any possible violations.

The mission recommends that more intensified efforts should be put into the issue of the missing of all communities, as well as detainees. The mission, in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999), supports efforts to resolve the complex situation in Mitrovica.

In supporting the efforts currently being undertaken by UNMIK and KFOR, the mission underlines the responsibility carried by the Kosovo leadership for creating conditions conducive to improving inter-communal relations and promoting reconciliation. The mission conveyed firm and balanced messages to all community leaders that the responsibility lies with them to clearly and openly reject violence, extremism and terrorism. Promoting a culture of peace and non-violence is crucial for the success of these efforts.

In turn, minority communities too must realize that there is no alternative to establishing a multi-ethnic society. The mission acknowledges that the minority communities have legitimate grievances and urges UNMIK and KFOR to address these, but believes that the only viable future for all communities lies in participation. The Kosovo Serb community, in particular, must integrate into the structure being set up by UNMIK, rather than attempt to set up parallel structures.

These are basically the findings of the mission, and it is the intention of the Council to hold a public meeting with the participation of the Council and non-Council members on Friday, 22 June. We believe there will be wider participation of the membership of the United Nations in that public debate. We would also like to mention that the Council has authorized me, as the President of the Council, to transmit this report to Mr. Hans Haekkerup, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Kosovo, and to request him, while transmitting the report, to bring this report to the attention of all those with whom the Council mission had an opportunity to meet, and also to share this with the authorities in Belgrade. We believe that such wide dissemination of the report, the message contained in the report and the findings of the mission will be helpful in promoting greater understanding of the role of the Security Council with regard to the implementation of resolution 1244 (1999).

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council will remain seized of the matter.

The next meeting of the Security Council to consider the report, as I mentioned, will take place on Friday, 22 June, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4332

Security Council

Fifty-sixth year

Provisional

4332nd meeting

Tuesday, 19 June 2001, 4.30 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Chowdhury	(Bangladesh)
Members:	China	Mr. Shen Guofang
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Ireland	Mr. Ryan
	Jamaica	Miss Durrant
	Mali	Mr. Touré
	Mauritius	Mr. Gokool
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Granovsky
	Singapore	Ms. Lee
	Tunisia	Mr. Cherif
	Ukraine	Mr. Krokhmal
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The situation in Somalia.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

01-41698 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 4.30 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Somalia

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations. Members have before them document S/2001/589, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. If I hear no objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bangladesh, China, Colombia, France, Ireland, Jamaica, Mali, Mauritius, Norway, Russian Federation, Singapore, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1356 (2001).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4333

Security Council

Fifty-sixth year

Provisional

4333rd meeting

Thursday, 21 June 2001, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Azad	(Bangladesh)
Members:	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	Colombia	Mr. Franco
	France	Mr. Doutriaux
	Ireland	Mr. Ryan
	Jamaica	Miss Durrant
	Mali	Mr. Kasse
	Mauritius	Mr. Latona
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Granovsky
	Singapore	Ms. Lee
	Tunisia	Mr. Jerandi
	Ukraine	Mr. Kulyk
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Clunes
	United States of America	Mr. Hume

Agenda

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (S/2001/571).

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01-42047 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (S/2001/571)

The President: I would like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the United Nations in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Zivalj (Bosnia and Herzegovina) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report on the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, document S/2001/571. Members also have before them document S/2001/610, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution (S/2001/610) before it. If I hear no objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bangladesh, China, Colombia, France, Ireland, Jamaica, Mali, Mauritius, Norway, Russian Federation, Singapore, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1357 (2001).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.4334

Security Council

Fifty-sixth year

Provisional

4334th meeting

Thursday, 21 June 2001, 10.25 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Azad	(Bangladesh)
Members:	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	Colombia	Mr. Franco
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Ireland	Mr. Ryan
	Jamaica	Miss Durrant
	Mali	Mr. Kasse
	Mauritius	Mr. Neewoor
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Granovsky
	Singapore	Ms. Lee
	Tunisia	Mr. Jerandi
	Ukraine	Mr. Kuchinsky
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

Role of the Security Council in the prevention of armed conflicts

Report of the Secretary-General on the prevention of armed conflict (S/2001/574).

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

01-42053 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Role of the Security Council in the prevention of armed conflicts

Report of the Secretary-General on the prevention of armed conflict (S/2001/574)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Argentina, Belarus, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, South Africa and Sweden in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President Mr. Listre (Argentina), Mr. Laptenok (Belarus), Mr. Fonseca (Brazil), Mr. Duval (Canada), Mr. Niehaus (Costa Rica), Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt), Mr. Pal (India) Mr. Widodo (Indonesia), Mr. Al-Douri (Iraq), Mr. Aekasaka (Japan), Mr. Yahya (Malaysia), Mr. Navarrete (Mexico), Mr. Apata (Nigeria), Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan), Mr. Sun Joun-yung (Republic of Korea), Mr. Nacerodien (South Africa) and Mr. Schori (Sweden) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on the prevention of armed conflict, document S/2001/574.

I will begin by paying tribute to my Jamaican colleague, Foreign Minister Paul Robertson, who presided over the Council debate on conflict prevention last July. The Jamaican delegation deserves our appreciation for its initiative in following up the issue in a substantive manner.

The report of the Secretary-General before us provides for the first time a substantive basis for our discussion on conflict prevention. The need for such a systematic approach has, however, long been felt. The Agenda for Peace placed emphasis on prevention. Our purpose today is to take the matter a decisive step forward. The consultative and forward-looking approach to the report and its recommendations by participants in today's debate will facilitate that process.

The General Assembly is expected to take up the report on 12 July. That will also provide the occasion for a more elaborate discussion. In our meeting today, I shall encourage speakers to focus on the recommendations, made specifically for action by the Security Council.

I give the floor to the Deputy Secretary-General, who will introduce the report of the Secretary-General.

The Deputy Secretary-General: Recent debates, including those at the Millennium Summit and the Security Council summit last September, have shown wide agreement on the need to make conflict prevention a central pillar of our collective security system in the twenty-first century. I therefore welcome this opportunity to present the first report on this subject, which the Secretary-General has submitted to both the Security Council and the General Assembly.

If this report has one message, it is that we must intensify our efforts to move from a culture of reaction to one of prevention. Drawing on the lessons we have learned, the Secretary-General proposes the following 10 principles which, in his view, should guide our future approach to conflict prevention.

First, conflict prevention is one of the primary obligations of Member States set forth in the Charter and our efforts in conflict prevention must be in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter.

Second, conflict prevention must begin with national Governments and local actors. Otherwise, it is unlikely to succeed. They have the primary responsibility. The United Nations and the international community should support their efforts and assist them in building national capacities.

Third, the most useful instruments of prevention are those described in Chapter VI of the Charter, which deals with the peaceful settlement of disputes. Measures under Chapter VII are normally taken only after a conflict has broken out, though they may still have a preventive effect by deterring other potential conflicts. There may also be cases where certain measures under Chapter VII, such as economic sanctions, can be used preventively.

Fourth, to be most effective, preventive actions should be initiated as early as possible. The sooner a dispute or problem that might lead to conflict can be identified and addressed successfully, the less likely it is that it will deteriorate into violent conflict.

Fifth, the primary focus of prevention should be the multidimensional root causes of conflict. The proximate cause of conflict may be an outbreak of public disorder or a protest over a particular incident, but the root causes are more likely to be found in socio-economic inequities, systematic ethnic discrimination, denial of human rights, disputes over political participation or longstanding grievances over the allocation of land, water and other resources.

Sixth, an effective preventive strategy requires a comprehensive approach that encompasses both short-term and long-term political, development, humanitarian and human rights programmes.

Seventh, conflict prevention and sustainable development reinforce each other. An investment in prevention should be seen as a simultaneous investment in sustainable development, since it is obvious that the latter is more likely to happen in a peaceful environment.

Eighth, there is therefore a case for looking at United Nations development programmes and activities from a conflict-prevention perspective. This in turn requires greater coherence and coordination in the United Nations system, with a specific focus on conflict prevention.

Ninth, the United Nations is not the only actor in prevention and may not always be the actor best suited to take the lead. Member States, international and regional organizations, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and other civil society actors also have very important roles to play.

Tenth and finally, effective preventive action by the United Nations requires sustained political will on the part of Member States. This includes, first and foremost, a readiness to provide the United Nations with the necessary political support and resources for undertaking effective preventive action and developing its institutional capacity in this field.

Now, how can this Council, which has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, enhance its role in conflict prevention? The Secretary-General proposes a number of means to help identify and capitalize more easily on windows of opportunity for preventive action. One is the practice, which the Secretary-General intends to initiate, of providing periodic regional or subregional reports to the Council on disputes with a potential to threaten international peace and security. Another is the proposition that the Council consider the establishment of new mechanisms, such as an ad hoc informal working group, another subsidiary organ or some other informal technical arrangement for discussing prevention cases in a more sustained and structured way. The Council may also wish to consider sending fact-finding missions with multidisciplinary expert support to potential conflict areas, with the aim of working out comprehensive prevention strategies.

The report calls on the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council to play a more active role in conflict prevention and to enhance their interaction with the Security Council in this field. One of the recommendations made to the General Assembly is that it authorize the Secretary-General and other United Nations organs to take advantage of the advisory competence of the International Court of Justice. Needless to say, Member States themselves are also urged to resort to the Court earlier and more often to settle their disputes.

As to his own preventive role, the Secretary-General thinks that it could be enhanced by increasing the use of interdisciplinary fact-finding and confidence-building missions to volatile areas; by developing regional prevention strategies with regional partners and the relevant United Nations organs and agencies; by establishing an informal network of eminent persons; and by improving the capacity and resource base for preventive action in the Secretariat.

I would like to draw the Council's attention to two other recommendations in the report. One is that Member States support the follow-up processes launched by the last two high-level meetings between

the United Nations and regional organizations, which dealt with conflict prevention and peace-building, respectively, and provide increased resources for the development of regional capacities in these fields.

The other is that donor States should increase the flow of official development assistance, which has dropped to alarmingly low levels in recent years. Development assistance cannot by itself prevent or end conflict, but it does facilitate the creation of opportunities and the political, economic and social environment within which national actors can build a peaceful, equitable and just society.

All that being said, let me emphasize that effective conflict prevention requires action beyond what is recommended in this report and, indeed, beyond any institutional mechanism. The international community has a moral responsibility to ensure that vulnerable peoples are protected. On at least two occasions in the recent past, in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, we failed to live up to this responsibility.

The question remains, why is effective conflict prevention still so seldom practised, and why do we so often fail when there is a clear potential for a preventive strategy to succeed? Past experience offers two main answers to this question. First, if the Government concerned refuses to admit that it has a problem which could lead to violent conflict and rejects offers of assistance, there often is very little that outside actors, including the United Nations, can do. Secondly, the international community, including the Security Council and the Member States of the United Nations, all too often lacks the political will to take effective action in time.

But such attitudes are not the only obstacle to effective preventive action. No less significant are the ways in which the Member States define their national interests in any given crisis. As the world has changed in profound ways since the end of the cold war, our conceptions of national interest have failed to follow suit. A new, broader, more widely conceived definition of national interest in the new century would induce States to find far greater unity in the pursuit of the fundamental goals of the Charter. As the Secretary-General has stressed, in the growing number of challenges facing humanity, the collective interest is the national interest.

Preventive strategies are not easy to implement. The costs of prevention have to be paid in the present, while its benefits lie in the future. In addition, the benefits are often not tangible. When prevention succeeds, little happens that is visible. Yet the report clearly demonstrates that conflict prevention is the most desirable and cost-effective approach for promoting the peaceful and just international order envisaged in the Charter.

According to a study by the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, the international community spent about $200 billion on the seven major interventions of the 1990s — in Bosnia, Somalia, Rwanda, Haiti, the Persian Gulf, Cambodia and El Salvador, exclusive of Kosovo and East Timor. Such calculations do not, of course, reflect the human costs of war — death, injury, destruction, displacement, and their repercussions for families, communities, local and national institutions and economies, and neighbouring countries.

The message is clear: Governments which peacefully resolve a situation that might deteriorate into a violent conflict and call for preventive assistance as soon as it is needed provide the best protection for their citizens against unwelcome outside interference. Used in this way, international preventive action can significantly strengthen the capacity of Member States to preserve and exercise their national sovereignty.

It is my hope and the Secretary-General's hope that the United Nations system and Member States will be able to work together towards the implementation of the recommendations contained in this report. The constructive stance that the Security Council has already taken in the three open debates and subsequent presidential statements on this subject over the past two years is heartening. But the time has come to translate the rhetoric of conflict prevention into concrete action.

The President: I shall now give the floor to the members of the Council.

Mr. Franco (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to welcome you very warmly, Mr. President. We are honoured that you, as Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh, should be presiding over this important meeting of the Security Council today. Your presence lends even greater distinction to the magnificent work that has been carried out by Bangladesh this month during its presidency of the Council. We are also grateful to the Deputy Secretary-General for her presentation of the Secretary-General's

report now under consideration, which contains various recommendations on conflict prevention. We hope that this debate will contribute, as we all aspire, to the crafting of a culture of conflict prevention within the United Nations system and in particular among the Member States of the Organization.

Conflict prevention covers many human activities. It involves many actors and institutions working with diverse mandates. The proposals made by the Secretary-General place this topic at the core of our concerns and strengthen the original mission of the United Nations, which is to promote peace in the world. From that perspective, conflict prevention entails an ethical, political and social commitment on the part of our leaders.

In a number of its Articles, the Charter is eloquent on collective measures to prevent threats to peace, in particular in Chapter 6, to which the Deputy Secretary-General has referred. I believe that we should also take into consideration, for our future discussions, a recent document prepared by the Secretariat concerning mechanisms established by the General Assembly in the context of the prevention and settlement of disputes, which was presented to the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization last year.

Allow me to put forward my delegation's considerations on some of the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his report, in particular those that relate directly to the Security Council.

My first point has to do with the relationship among the principal organs of the United Nations. A distinction is usually drawn between short- and long-term measures in conflict prevention. In our opinion, the organs of the United Nations should keep both types of measures in their sights. We believe, however, that long-term measures are more suitable for effective interaction among the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, and that they should serve as the starting point for collective consideration. I am thinking in particular of the post-conflict reconstruction of societies, where robust disarmament demobilization and reintegration programmes and the inclusion of a civilian component in peacekeeping missions could serve to expand the area of interaction of these United Nations organs. We are gratified to see that the General Assembly has scheduled for July a debate on conflict prevention. As for the Economic and Social Council, we support the Secretary-General's proposal that it should devote a high-level segment of its regular session to this topic. Such debates will contribute to increasing the degree of responsibility of each of the Members of the United Nations vis-à-vis preventive measures.

Our second point relates to the role played by the Secretary-General. Short-term measures such as preventive diplomacy, fact-finding missions and reports on regional situations all provide fertile ground for the relationship between the Security Council and the Secretariat. We would like to highlight the Secretary-General's intention to provide the Council with periodic regional reports on conflict situations. We believe these reports can be useful if they correspond to strategies for prevention in particularly vulnerable regions. We would like to highlight, in particular, the inter-agency mission that was sent in March to West Africa. In our opinion, that mission could serve as a model for a regional or subregional approach to prevention in order to tackle other situations on that continent in collaboration with the Organization of African Unity and other, subregional organizations.

My delegation considers that the mission's report was not widely examined by the Security Council; it should be studied in greater depth with a view to promoting and reinforcing the dialogue that the Security Council has been holding for some time with the members of the Economic Community of West African States.

My third point concerns Security Council peace missions for the prevention of conflicts. The Security Council has been using such missions to provide orientation for efforts to bring about peace in conflict situations or to contribute to the restoration of peace in post-conflict situations. Their use in conflict prevention, as proposed by the Secretary-General, would necessitate a clarification of this objective in the terms of reference of a mission, and perhaps new financial arrangements supporting such missions. Some United Nations agencies have established what seems like a suitable system for funding the costs of missions that hinges on the income level of the participating countries.

Finally, our fourth point concerns arrangements within the Security Council to consider situations

where conflict prevention is at issue. The Secretary-General proposes to the Council the creation of a subsidiary organ, an informal working group or some other mechanism to consider preventive measures in specific situations. In order to be informed about these matters, the Security Council today relies on presentations made by the Secretary-General or his representatives or on the discretionary power of Members of the Organization to bring to the attention of the Security Council possible threats to peace. We should explore more carefully the feasibility of taking to the expert level the discussion of a topic that is essentially a political one.

One of the main purposes of this discussion, as we have said, is to encourage a culture of prevention. Just as different human communities respond to natural risks by adopting disaster prevention strategies, they should be keenly aware of the underlying tensions that threaten peace and should establish mechanisms to prevent conflict. The roots of each nation's reality could enable the United Nations to successfully promote the collective interest of a culture of prevention. This is why we have taken note with great interest of the 10 principles enshrined in paragraph 169, which in the opinion of the Secretary-General should guide the United Nations in this era. We agree with him that perhaps the time has come to adopt a solid declaration of principles to guide the United Nations and its Member States in consolidating a culture of prevention.

The President: I thank the representative of Colombia for his kind words addressed to me.

Miss Durrant (Jamaica): It is a pleasure to see you, Sir, the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, presiding over the deliberations of the Security Council. Your presence here today clearly reflects the commitment of Bangladesh to inculcating a culture of peace and non-violence in international affairs. I also wish to thank you for the kind words addressed to my country, Jamaica, and to our Foreign Minister, The Honourable Mr. Paul Robertson.

Allow me to also express my delegation's appreciation to Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette for her important statement and her introduction of the report of the Secretary-General on the prevention of armed conflict.

We welcome this comprehensive response to the discussions held last July, during Jamaica's presidency, in which the Security Council reviewed the complex dimensions of the causes and prevention of armed conflicts and which led to the adoption of the presidential statement inviting the Secretary-General to submit a report containing an analysis and recommendations on initiatives within the United Nations.

The Secretary-General's own commitment to promoting a culture of prevention within the United Nations system and among Member States is clearly borne out in his report. The report not only highlights the roles of the key players in conflict prevention within the United Nations system, in particular those of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Secretary-General, and United Nations funds and programmes, as well as the Bretton Woods institutions, but also appropriately identifies the important and indispensable roles of national Governments, international, regional and subregional organizations, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and other civil society actors. The report provides analyses and recommendations that should guide the Security Council in carrying out its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Secretary-General's report upholds the principle that being proactive in dealing with potential conflicts rather than responding to conflicts after they have occurred is a core mandate of the United Nations, with the Security Council having a primary role.

On a number of occasions we have examined the root causes of deadly conflicts and how they ultimately manifest themselves in the outbreak of war, causing death, suffering and economic devastation. What we have not determined, however, are the means to engage the international community in meaningfully preventing these causes from turning into deadly conflicts. The experiences of Rwanda, Srebrenica and many other conflicts around the world should have provided us with the political will and the impetus for conflict prevention. Yet we are left to answer the questions posed by the Secretary-General: Why is conflict prevention still so seldom practised, and why do we so often fail when there is a clear potential for a preventive strategy to succeed?

It is my delegation's hope that the result of today's debate and the debate to follow in the General Assembly will support the realization of the goal of

prevention as the rule rather than the exception throughout the United Nations system.

The report of the Secretary-General contains a number of important recommendations addressed to many parts of the United Nations system. The Security Council must give serious consideration to those recommendations specific to its responsibilities and must undertake to work in collaboration with other organs in giving effect to them. The Secretary-General has urged us to demonstrate the political will necessary to assume our responsibilities in support of the United Nations in carrying out effective preventive action.

While it is not possible for me to dwell in great detail on the recommendations contained in the report, I will highlight those that relate directly to the premise that the Security Council has a key role to play in the prevention of armed conflict.

First, the Secretary-General's stated intention to provide periodic regional or subregional reports to the Security Council on threats to international peace and security and to provide suggestions with respect to how these threats might be addressed by the Council is an important first step in the process. It is imperative that the Secretary-General tell the Council what it needs to know so that the Council can formulate meaningful and effective responses.

Working in tandem or in cooperation with regional and subregional organizations in preparing those reports will enable us to benefit from those organizations' unique perspectives. We also support the idea of the Security Council considering the use of multidisciplinary expert support in its fact-finding missions to potential conflict areas and the establishment of new mechanisms for discussing conflict prevention measures on the basis of the reports of the Secretary-General and of the missions.

Second, Jamaica supports the steps proposed by the Secretary-General to enhance his traditional preventive role with respect to: the increased use of United Nations interdisciplinary fact-finding and confidence-building missions; to develop regional prevention strategies with regional partners and appropriate United Nations organs and agencies, including the possibility of establishing liaison offices with regional organizations; to use eminent persons for advice and action in support of preventing and resolving armed conflicts; and to improve the capacity and resource base for preventive action in the Secretariat. The issue of the Secretariat's capacity and resource base must be addressed by the relevant bodies, and the Secretary-General's request for a United-Nations-system-wide policy and analysis unit must be considered as a matter of priority. Early warning is a prerequisite for effective conflict prevention, and the Secretariat must have the capacity to carry out its responsibilities in that regard.

Third, Jamaica supports discussion in the Council on the use of preventive deployments before the onset of conflicts and the employment of such a strategy where appropriate. Where such missions have been used in the past, the United Nations has demonstrated success in preventing armed conflicts.

Fourth, we support the view that the Security Council should include peace-building components within peacekeeping operations. As we have stated in the past, peace-building is an important tool in conflict prevention, which may be applied before, during or after a conflict, as appropriate.

Fifth, Jamaica fully supports the view that adoption by the international community of measures to prevent the misuse and illicit transfer of small arms is of great importance in the prevention of armed conflicts. In that context, we support efforts to address the problems caused by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and we look forward to meaningful action being taken at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects, to be held in July. In that vein, we support also the inclusion by the Security Council of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration components in United Nations peacekeeping mandates, and we urge full support for such programmes.

Sixth, we support the call to address the needs of children and adolescents as a long-term conflict prevention measure, including the deployment of child-protection advisers in peacekeeping operations, and we support policies and resources that target the needs of children, including adolescents, in situations of potential conflict. Jamaica will participate fully in addressing many of those issues during the special session of the General Assembly on children, to be held in September.

Seventh, as the Secretary-General has aptly reminded us, the Security Council adopted resolution 1325 (2000), aimed at giving greater attention to gender perspectives in its conflict prevention and

peace-building efforts. While some progress has been made, much needs to be done. Jamaica fully supports increased action to give full effect to resolution 1325 (2000), and we look forward to the action plan being developed by the Secretary-General's task force on women, peace and security.

We are being constantly challenged by an increasing number of deadly conflicts, which threaten international peace and security as well as the social, political and economic well-being of the global community. The ability of the international community to relieve the suffering of a vast majority of the affected is severely strained. The high cost of peacekeeping and of reconstruction in post-conflict situations weighs heavily in favour of prevention and peace-building measures to address the root causes of deadly conflicts. Already those costs deplete the limited resources made available to the international community to meet the development needs of the least developed countries. In his report, the Secretary-General confirms the view that although poverty by itself is not a root cause of violent conflict, poverty breeds conflict, and that equitable sustainable development does indeed have an important role in preventing armed conflict. The Secretary-General also reminds us that development cannot take place in conflict situations.

Finally, my delegation supports the convening of a meeting of the Security Council at the ministerial level, as requested in the presidential statement contained in document S/PRST/2000/25, in order to take appropriate action in furthering the Council's role in the prevention of armed conflict.

The President: I thank the representative of Jamaica for the kind words she addressed to me.

Mr. Cunningham (United States of America): I too want to join in welcoming you, Mr. President, to the Security Council today and for making yourself available for this important meeting. This is a topic of great importance to all members of the United Nations community. I want particularly to thank the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General for their efforts to move this Organization from reacting to crises to seeing if we can do a better job of preventing them. We have a very thoughtful report before us today; it provides a lot for us to consider and look at in the future as we think about this important issue.

I want to call attention in particular to the Secretary-General's observation that the primary responsibility for conflict prevention rests with national Governments, with civil society playing an important role. The main role of the United Nations and the international community is to support national efforts for conflict prevention and to assist in building national capacity in this field.

I think maybe one of the most useful services provided by the Secretary-General's report is that, while it reviews the mechanisms and institutions that are available to assist in the prevention of conflict, it really highlights the need for leadership and political will in dealing with crisis. It is our task to find ways to support prevention, but the primary need in most crises, if not all crises, is for someone — an actor of some sort, the Secretary-General or a regional organization — to take the lead. With that leadership, the question then becomes how the Security Council, the United Nations, the General Assembly and other United Nations bodies can support that impetus and that initiative to head off a conflict.

In that regard, the report is very useful in clarifying how the various parts of the United Nations system can improve cooperation and coordination. We fully agree that the Secretary-General, the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the International Court of Justice and the various United Nations agencies, funds and programmes all have contributions to make. It is also necessary — as is increasingly happening, I am glad to say — that the various parts of the United Nations system improve communication with one another to forge new partnerships. But we have seen repeatedly in our work over the past year how that sometimes does not happen. We need to rededicate ourselves — all of us, as United Nations Members and not just as Security Council members — to breaking down barriers to communication and false attitudes that prevent United Nations bodies and institutions from talking to one another and from cooperating.

We strongly support the recommendation that the Security Council and the General Assembly make full use of the information and analysis provided by United Nations and other human rights mechanisms, as well as by non-governmental organizations, in order to identify massive human rights violations and to take early action. In our view, that should be a central element of trying to address crisis; we are seeing it play out now

in various parts of the world. We can do better in supporting that.

The Security Council is already moving in the direction of many of the Secretary-General's recommendations, and I think we have improved our work over the past year. In recent years members of the Council have drawn upon the advice and information provided by United Nations officials responsible for the protection of children in conflict, AIDS prevention and humanitarian response, in support of their mandated work in maintaining international peace and security.

I think that the Council is receptive to making further use of the great expertise and experience reflected throughout the United Nations system — I know my delegation certainly is — and we are increasingly doing so.

I wanted especially to applaud the Secretary-General's commitment to enhancing his own role in conflict prevention through four significant initiatives. He proposes to authorize more fact-finding and confidence-building missions to volatile regions; to build relationships between the United Nations and regional partners; to seek the help of panels of eminent persons for conflict prevention; and to improve the capacity within the Secretariat in support of conflict prevention. All of these have our strong support, and it goes back to the point I made at the outset about the need for leadership.

We also applaud the Secretary-General's recognition of the important role that must be played by civil society and private economic interests in conflict prevention. In volatile areas of potential conflict, the activities of international non-governmental organizations, both in relief efforts and in efforts aimed at creating and strengthening social, political and economic institutions, are indispensable. This is another barrier that we need to overcome. We simply cannot expect economic progress and development to take place without the involvement of private entities and non-governmental organizations.

My comments are by no means an exhaustive review of the advice and recommendations provided by this thoughtful report. This Council and the other constituent parts of the United Nations system will need time to evaluate it and time to work to fully digest the details and the recommendations. But it is a good basis — indeed, an excellent basis — for going ahead. Our hope is that we will be able to use it to devise better means to prevent conflicts and build on the progress that we are already making. Our goal is for us to need fewer interventions, peacekeeping missions or massive humanitarian relief efforts in future. We are making progress, but I want to note again the need for leadership and will to act before crisis instead of afterwards.

The President: I thank the representative of the United States for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Eldon (United Kingdom): Mr. Minister, it is very good to see you here today, and I well remember your visit during Bangladesh's last presidency of the Security Council. It is truly a pleasure to have you back with us. I wish also to thank the Deputy Secretary-General for her introduction to what is a very important and comprehensive report from the Secretariat.

Let me also draw attention to the fact that the representative of Sweden will be speaking later on in this debate on behalf of the European Union, and I associate myself with the remarks that the Council will hear later from him.

We are grateful for the comprehensive and thought-provoking report that we have in front of us today. The time has come to translate the rhetoric of conflict prevention into concrete action. We strongly endorse the Secretary-General's call for the international community to move from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention. Prevention should be the cornerstone of the United Nations collective security system for the twenty-first century.

Any assessment of conflict must include the political, socio-economic and developmental variables relevant to that conflict. Preventive action must address its root causes rather than its symptoms. Therefore we strongly support the linkage the report makes between conflict prevention and sustainable development. Conflict and sustainable development are mutually exclusive conditions: over time, one will inevitably erode the other. Our aim must be to ensure that sustainable development — not conflict — gains the upper hand. Our collective efforts to meet the international development targets and the other commitments set out in the Millennium Summit Declaration are an important contribution towards addressing the root causes of conflict.

The United Nations agencies, funds and specialized agencies are key players in conflict prevention, in addition to the Secretariat, and here I would endorse the point that has just been made so eloquently by Ambassador Cunningham. We strongly support recommendation 10 of the Secretary-General's report, which encourages the administrators of United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies to consider how best to integrate conflict prevention into their various activities. This will be an important contribution towards mainstreaming conflict prevention approaches into their work.

We also agree with the report's assessment that the United Nations will not always be the actor best placed to take the lead. Where it is, the challenge, as the Secretary-General correctly identifies, is to mobilize the collective potential of the United Nations system with greater coherence and focus. This is an important area in which, frankly, we must do better. Greater interaction on conflict prevention between the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, as recommended by the Secretary-General, would be a good place to start.

That is why the United Kingdom, during our Security Council presidency last April, and with an eye on the importance of that need for coherence and coordination, suggested a joint meeting of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council to discuss those issues. We should not lose sight of the potential this cooperation can bring. We also strongly encourage more systematic cooperation between other parts of the United Nations system, with the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions, and with other international actors. This is vital if scarce resources are to be used in the most effective way. There is, for example — as everyone around this table knows better than most — a critical need for improvement in designing effective, properly resourced disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes.

As the Secretary-General says, the United Nations needs to work with and help strengthen the capacity of regional partners. This has been a key conclusion of several of the Council's recent debates on conflict prevention and peace-building. We are keen to see this implemented in concrete and practical ways. Effective prevention strategies require the cooperation of both national and regional actors. The use of inter-agency task forces, such as the recent Task Force visit to West Africa, offers opportunities to integrate the efforts of the United Nations with those of regional and subregional organizations.

We also welcome the Secretary-General's intention to provide the Security Council with periodic regional or subregional reports on threats to international peace and security. We agree with his view that this approach will help to strengthen, rather than diminish, sovereignty. There is a powerful logic in the report's description of conflict prevention as being

> "the best protection for [a state's] citizens against unwelcome outside interference" *(S/2001/574, para. 168)*.

But, while respecting institutional mandates, we must adapt our efforts to the problem at hand. In certain regions, there may not be formal organizations with which to consult, but, instead, groupings of countries which have come together under informal ad hoc arrangements. We believe that the United Nations needs to be more creative about finding ways to work with such informal groups. The effectiveness of such strategies will be enhanced further if civil society and the private sector are pulling in the same direction. We therefore echo the Secretary-General's appeal to the private sector to adopt socially responsible practices designed to prevent, rather than foment, conflict.

Paragraph 55 of the report refers to the recent inter-agency mission to West Africa, which I have mentioned earlier. This, among other things, recommends the establishment of a United Nations office in West Africa headed by a new special representative. We support this idea, but need clarification on certain key aspects. For example, we would welcome clarification of the role and mandate of this office versus those of other Special Representatives of the Secretary-General in the region, and those of the political and post-conflict peace-building offices and United Nations country teams which are also present there. In this respect, we encourage stronger links between Headquarters and the United Nations country teams in the field.

We agree with recommendations 5 to 7 of the report on the important role of the International Court of Justice in the prevention of conflict and the peaceful settlement of disputes. The United Kingdom has for many years accepted the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court We urge Members of the Organization that have not yet done so to take this step.

We also welcome the thrust of recommendation 9 and the Secretary-General's intention to enhance the traditional preventive role of his office. We would encourage him to develop and enhance his preventive diplomacy efforts in the ways outlined in the report. We stand ready to support him in that endeavour.

Finally, the report contains an appeal to the donor community to increase the flow of development assistance to developing countries. Over the past few years the United Kingdom has been one of the few countries to significantly increase the resources it devotes to development assistance.

We are full-square behind the United Nations efforts in taking forward the recommendations set out in this report. It is important, and that is why I have spoken at greater length than usual. We will continue to engage with the Secretariat and the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in finding ways to do this. By reducing the level and intensity of conflicts, we will significantly enhance prospects for global development and poverty reduction. That is a goal to which we should all be directing our efforts.

The President: I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation, Sir, welcomes your coming to New York to preside over this important open debate of the Security Council. I am also grateful to the Secretary-General for his report, as well as to Ms. Fréchette, the Deputy Secretary-General, for her statement.

The Secretary-General's report is comprehensive. It has provided us with a detailed analysis of the role of the United Nations in conflict prevention. It thus provides the Security Council, the General Assembly and other United Nations organs an excellent foundation for the consideration of the subject and for taking relevant actions.

The report reiterates that the United Nations conflict-prevention efforts must conform with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and that successful conflict prevention depends on the agreement and support of the national governments and other major national actors. These are very important principles and guidelines that need to be followed by the United Nations in its conflict-prevention work. I am confident that through the consideration of this report the Members will gain a better understanding of the role of the United Nations in conflict prevention.

The root causes of the armed conflicts in the world today can be found in very complex economic, social, historic and religious issues, as well as in the tribal and territorial problems that are a legacy of colonialism. Therefore conflict prevention must treat both the symptoms and causes of the disease. Prevention strategies will have to suit the needs of the different regions, countries and circumstances of given conflicts.

In the wake of the cold war we have seen an increase in armed conflicts within States, particularly conflicts between different ethnic groups. In the Middle East, the Balkans and the Great Lakes region of Africa there are ethnic conflicts, and sometimes these conflicts are further complicated by religious disputes. As an overwhelming majority of countries in the world are multi-ethnic and multi-religious, the realization of national unity and harmony, including the equal treatment and coexistence of different religions, is the most basic condition for social stability and development. Increases in ethnic tension and religious disputes will only lead to turbulence and economic and social stagnation in the concerned countries and regions.

From the perspective of conflict prevention, it is necessary to advocate national equality, harmony and the sharing of interests. In particular, minorities need to be guaranteed equal status and an equal right to participate in the political, economic and cultural life of the country. If necessary, minorities also need preferential treatment and to be encouraged to participate in the administration of the State. It is also necessary, in the interest of promoting religious freedom, to advocate mutual respect among different religions, and for tolerance and reconciliation.

The international community is a large family composed of different countries. It is important to stress the democratization of inter-State relations in conflict prevention. Because countries have different social systems, ideologies, value systems and religious beliefs, it is necessary in international relations to strictly abide by the basic principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-aggression, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence.

The United Nations needs to play a significant role in the democratization of inter-State relations. As regards the Middle East, the Balkans and the Great Lakes region in Africa, as well as other countries and regions where conflicts currently exist, if the parties concerned can abide by the basic norms governing inter-State relations, then their conflicts can be speedily resolved and the outbreak of new conflicts can be prevented.

Recently leaders of China, the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan held a successful meeting in Shanghai. They established a Shanghai organization which represents a new model for regional cooperation characterized by joint initiatives on the part of both large and small States, by making security the top priority, and by mutual benefit and synergy. The Shanghai spirit thus fostered stresses inter-State trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for pluralism in civilization and common development. This is also an important initiative in the area of establishing regional conflict-prevention mechanisms to fight terrorism, separatism and extremism, which are detrimental to regional security.

The wars and armed conflicts taking place in some countries and regions have taken a heavy toll on the lives and property of the people. Although the capacity and role of the United Nations in conflict prevention are limited, as rightly pointed out by the Secretary-General in his report, conflict prevention is still an important dimension of the maintenance of international peace and security. It remains one of the major tasks of the United Nations. China is prepared, with other Members, to make its contribution to enhancing the United Nations conflict-prevention capacity.

Mr. Jerandi (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): My delegation is honoured to see you, Mr. Minister, presiding over this open meeting of the Security Council. This confirms once again Bangladesh's unswerving commitment to peace and prevention of armed conflict. We would also like to thank the Secretary-General for the high-quality report he has presented to the Council, and Ms. Fréchette for her important statement in introducing this document.

Our debate today is very important because it concerns the prevention of armed conflict, a topic that takes us to the core, to the very heart of the prerogatives of the United Nations and its mission, to its *raison d'être* of protecting humanity from the scourge of war and armed conflict. At the dawn of the twenty-first century, the prevention of armed conflicts remains a burning topic, and after 55 years of existence the United Nations, the indispensable instrument of such prevention, is today endowed with a wealth of experience that will enable it to fine-tune its role in order better to respond to the requirements of the modern world.

The Security Council has already undertaken a careful consideration of the question of prevention, to which it devoted two presidential statements. It has also dealt with the topic in other texts that emphasize related areas such as peace-building, to which a presidential statement, inter alia, was devoted in February, during the Tunisian presidency, under the topic "Peace-building: towards a comprehensive approach".

Today there is real awareness in the Security Council, in the United Nations system and in the international community as a whole of the need for a real change in the perception of the role of prevention and in the understanding of its rightful place in maintaining peace and security in their broadest meaning.

The Security Council is intensely active in the field of prevention, in particular by setting up peacekeeping operations, which are preventive operations par excellence. The General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council are also exercising their respective prerogatives in this field. We are gratified to see that the report is also addressed to the General Assembly, for it addresses many of that body's concerns.

Ever since he acceded to his lofty responsibilities at the head of the Organization, the Secretary-General has promoted conflict prevention into an enduring feature of his efforts for peace, and he has defined the principle of the need to progress from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention of armed conflict. Over the past few years, other actors within and outside the United Nations have also made efforts in this direction. It is now clear that the time has come to develop a comprehensive and coherent strategy that will enable the international community to make conflict prevention an essential component of its strategies and policies to maintain international peace

and security and to promote economic and social development. In short, this is the moment to take a substantive step towards making prevention a central element of international initiatives for peace and development.

It is in this context that the report of the Secretary-General assumes its importance. The analysis it contains is pertinent and piercing, and includes the ten principles that he has proposed to support promotion and prevention efforts. The recommendations are rich, diverse and certainly very useful. On the whole, we support them. The path he has traced towards the goal is clear. Therefore the Security Council should undertake, without delay, a careful examination of this document — bearing in mind, however, the need for a reasonable period of time for our Governments to study the report and formulate clearly articulated positions. We therefore propose the establishment of a working group of the Security Council whose mandate would be to study the report in detail and make suggestions on specific decisions and actions that the Council could take to follow up the report of the Secretary-General.

Tunisia will actively participate in the work of the Council and the other bodies of the United Nations on this report because a consideration of all aspects of prevention should now become a priority for us.

The President: I thank the representative of Tunisia for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Granovsky (Russian Federation) *(spoke in Russian)*: We associate ourselves with the warm words expressed to you, Mr. President, by previous speakers. It is a great honour for us that at today's exceptionally important meeting of the Security Council the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh is presiding over our work. Bangladesh is a State which is friendly with Russia, and which plays an important role in the efforts of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security. We also express gratitude to the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Louise Fréchette, for having introduced the report of the Secretary-General and for her important comments.

Our meeting has ushered in an important discussion which will take place in the United Nations about the report of the Secretary-General on the prevention of armed conflict. We are very grateful to him for having prepared this important document, which sets forth a well-considered strategy for an approach which should be followed by the principal international organization in the search for answers to the many and varied challenges of our day.

Russia agrees with the main thrust of the report and supports most of its recommendations. Furthermore, we believe that the Secretary-General has drawn important conclusions which should be the basis of the overall approach to settling crises, including humanitarian ones. We refer primarily to the conclusions about the key role of the United Nations in strengthening national capacities for reacting to crises and about the need for the consent and support of each interested government and its internal political actors with regard to efforts to prevent conflicts, and also with regard to the desirability of political will being demonstrated by neighbouring States, regional actors and other countries.

Before setting specific considerations on the substance of the recommendations of the report, I should like to make it clear that we deem it advisable to confine ourselves now simply to those issues which relate directly to the Security Council. As you know, the President of the General Assembly has planned to hold a general discussion on the 12th and 13th of July, at which time our delegation will speak on the remaining aspects of this problem.

We support the proposal of the Secretary-General about the search for new forms of interaction between the Security Council and the General Assembly in the interests of a more effective, more timely ability to prevent armed conflicts. We believe that periodic formal meetings of the Security Council, at which there could be a frank exchange of views about hot spots and the situation around them, is one such channel for a useful and, we hope, productive dialogue on this question.

We also support the ideas of the Secretary-General with respect to his preparation of periodic reports on situations in so-called areas at risk. We believe that this initiative is exceptionally important. Russia also agrees with the Secretary-General's approach with regard to the dispatch by the Security Council of fact-finding missions. We are convinced that these missions have already and repeatedly proven their necessity and played an important role in the search for necessary solutions.

At the same time, we have some doubts about the advisability of creating certain subsidiary bodies of the

Security Council to discuss conflict prevention. We see no need to institutionalize our discussions.

In conclusion, I would express the hope that the discussion in various United Nations formats of the Secretary-General's comprehensive report will truly help to enhance the effectiveness of the international community's work in the prevention of armed conflicts.

The President: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Ryan (Ireland): Ireland is very pleased to see Foreign Minister Azad of Bangladesh presiding over this important meeting. We welcome him warmly.

May I also thank Deputy Secretary-General Fréchette for her thoughtful and comprehensive introductory statement.

Later in today's debate, Sweden will make a statement in its capacity as Presidency of the European Union (EU). Ireland fully associates itself with that statement.

The report which the Secretary-General has provided to this Council and to the General Assembly is a valuable and forward-thinking document which presents a challenge to the entire United Nations system and to the Member States. The report makes clear in human and economic terms the inherent, indeed self-evident, benefits of conflict prevention, as well as the corollary: the devastating consequences of failure to prevent conflict and of tardy reaction to situations where lives are already in danger or being lost.

The Secretary-General is correct. We need to undertake the conceptual leap to thinking in terms of prevention, to seeing conflict through the prevention lens. Ireland is glad to have the opportunity to discuss the Secretary-General's report here today and we look forward to its consideration by the General Assembly and the other relevant organs of the United Nations. We believe that the report should be approached in a practical manner and with an open mind. We should not be deflected today into a dispute over the prerogatives of the United Nations various organs. Instead we should try to tease out what the Security Council can do in practical terms to advance the goals in the Secretary-General's report.

Ireland supports the report's basic premises, its principles and, in general terms, its 29 recommendations. We would wish to look in particular at three specific areas: first, the complementary relationship between conflict prevention and development; secondly, the important role of regional organizations; and, thirdly, the need to strengthen coherence and capacity concerning conflict prevention in the United Nations system.

First of all, let me take up the complementary relationship between conflict prevention and development. An effective conflict prevention strategy will require a comprehensive and multidimensional approach that encompasses both short-term preventative and long-term development aspects. As the Secretary-General has noted, development assistance by itself cannot prevent or end conflict, but it can help to create the underlying conditions for the development of peaceful, stable and prosperous societies.

In our view, development cooperation focused on poverty eradication is the most powerful instrument that the international community has to address the long-term root causes of conflict and to promote peace. The Secretary-General has called for development assistance to focus on decreasing structural risk factors. The primary risk factor is poverty. A central issue that we all need to address is the decline in aid flows to the poorest countries. We echo the Secretary-General's call for the donor community to increase aid flows to our developing country partners. At the Millennium Summit, the Prime Minister of Ireland, Mr. Bertie Ahern, committed Ireland to reaching the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product by 2007. This will involve a four-fold increase in our development assistance budget.

If the international community is to be genuine and serious about conflict prevention, we must be wholehearted in supporting poverty reduction and sustainable development. We should not say one thing in this room and act differently elsewhere. Ireland would also like to see enhanced coherence between major donors. We strongly support efforts to strengthen the partnership between the United Nations system and other major partners, including the European Union. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund involvement in helping developing countries prepare poverty-reduction strategy papers has a key role in long-term conflict prevention efforts. The United Nations operational development arm can play a very significant role in poverty reduction and in helping

partner Governments reach the development targets agreed at the Millennium Summit.

Successful conflict prevention means that we must work closely alongside our developing country partners before, during and after conflict. Prevention also means preventing the re-emergence of serious conflict. In that context, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes are increasingly seen as an essential part of post-conflict resolution. Ireland supports the Secretary-General's recommendation that this Council include, as appropriate, a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration component in the mandates of United Nations peacekeeping and peace-building operations. It is also important to be aware that these operations ensure that the development dimension is built in as a matter of course.

We agree very much with the Secretary-General that efforts to prevent conflict should promote a broad range of human rights, including civil and political rights, as well as economic, social and cultural rights, and the right to development. Meaningful conflict prevention strategies must also take account of gender equality and Ireland strongly endorses the Secretary-General's call on this Council to give greater attention to gender perspectives in conflict prevention and peace-building.

In the second instance, let me address the important role of regional organizations. Many conflicts are inseparable from their regional contexts. Support for regional and subregional actors should therefore be a central element of conflict prevention. For example, the development of appropriate institutional capacities for early warning and conflict prevention by the Organization of African Unity and, more recently, the Economic Community of West African States is warmly welcomed. At the same time, there is a need for international partners to provide further assistance and training to enable these and other organizations to build on their achievements to date.

Ireland supports the development of regional prevention strategies by the United Nations and its regional partners, inter alia, through the establishment of United Nations liaison offices. The regular meetings between the United Nations and the regional organizations have considerable potential. The Secretary-General has recommended that the follow-up processes to these meetings receive the fullest support. Ireland agrees with him.

As a member of the European Union, and as a long-standing contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations, Ireland sees a growing synergy between the EU's work and the work of the United Nations in conflict prevention. The fostering of a culture of prevention, recommended to us by Secretary-General Annan, is indeed at the heart of the EU's approach. The recent European Council in Gothenburg adopted an EU Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts. This Programme accords the EU's highest political priority to improving effectiveness and coherence in this area.

Ireland joins the Secretary-General in highlighting the preventive potential of peacekeeping operations. We have all seen the benefit of preventive deployment, as well as the cost involved when the international community either fails to deploy preventively, or when it withdraws or winds up a successful ongoing operation.

We believe, in particular, that there is untapped potential in preventive peacekeeping activities conducted by civilian police, whose community-policing approach can play a significant role in reducing tension and building confidence.

The goal of conflict prevention is an important consideration in building crisis management-capabilities in the context of European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). Ireland believes that the Secretary-General's recommendations are fully consistent with the European Union's programme for the prevention of violent conflicts, which confirms that "The development of ESDP has, since the outset, been intended to strengthen the EU's capacity fo action in the crucial field of conflict prevention".

Thirdly, I would like to stress the need to strengthen coherence and capacity in the United Nations system concerning conflict prevention.

The Secretary-General has clearly identified the need for enhanced coherence in our conflict prevention efforts. The United Nations has developed important new tools to improve coherence through the common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. These new instruments help focus the "conflict prevention lens" by identifying, prioritizing and implementing a coherent approach to development and conflict prevention with our development partners at the country level.

This Council has recognized the important role played by the resident coordinator system as the United Nations presence on the ground before, during and after conflict. This role should be enhanced.

We support the Secretary-General's call for greater coordination on conflict prevention within the United Nations system and his call for adequate resources for the Department of Political Affairs to carry out its responsibilities as the system focal point in this area.

The establishment of a new unit to serve as the secretariat for the Executive Committee on Peace and Security, as recently proposed by the Secretary-General elsewhere, would underpin efforts to enhance a strategic approach by the Organization to conflict prevention. We support the establishment of this unit, and we call on all other delegations to demonstrate their commitment to such a strategic approach by supporting this proposal.

At the same time, we want to ensure a joined-up approach in the United Nations, both at Headquarters and in the field. We must at all levels ensure an entry point for the development dimension.

The Charter of the United Nations is a document of seminal political sophistication and prescience. It was agreed by leaders whose life experience had been forged in the crucible of the most destructive war in history. The authors of the Charter and the Member States that embrace it have given to the United Nations, as one of its principal purposes, "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". Had the purpose been to save the generations from the effects of war, the Charter would have said so. It did not. The vision of the United Nations Charter is in significant part a preventive one when it comes to conflict. Surely this is not in question.

With this in mind, Ireland will strive so that the Secretary-General's report may trigger far-reaching, practical action to realize that vision.

Mr. President: I thank the representative of Ireland for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): It is an honour and a pleasure to see you, Mr. Foreign Minister, presiding today over this very important debate that has brought us together.

France welcomes the important report that the Secretary-General has transmitted to us. We also welcome the initiative taken last July by Jamaica. Given the discussions on this theme that were conducted in 1999 and then in 2000, this is a good occasion to take stock of the situation on the basis of the assessment, conclusions and concrete recommendations of Secretary-General Kofi Annan, for which we thank him.

Sweden will be making a statement in due course on behalf of the European Union, to which my delegation, of course, fully subscribes. I would like to make a few comments on the points that seem to me particularly essential.

The report of the Secretary-General and the discussion that will be taking place in the Council and in the General Assembly come at a good time. While the Brahimi report and the Millennium Summit have paved the way for the necessary reform of peacekeeping and the daily management of United Nations operations make us think increasingly of strategies for crisis resolution and post-conflict peace-building, it appears urgent to gear our strategies also towards the prevention of armed conflict.

Given the considerable United Nations efforts in peace operations to deal with conflicts, usually at a moment's notice and in urgent circumstances, it is necessary and legitimate to wonder whether the international community should not make an extra effort in order better to anticipate and prevent conflicts while there is still time to do so. Certainly this is the least costly solution — whether in human, political, economic or financial terms. Above all, it is the most suitable way to establish conditions for lasting peace. In the countries middle of an acute crisis – and we have several examples of such crises in Africa — the United Nations and the donors face the worst possible conditions in war-torn and occupied countries, with their resources sometimes plundered, and with a lack of clear political prospects for restoring trust among the people. In these conditions, to start implementing the economic and social development programmes that are necessary for bringing about a lasting resolution to the crisis is a considerable challenge. Moreover, these countries are marginalized by a world economy that has left them behind. Post-conflict peace-building, although it draws largely on the same resources and instruments as prevention, is consequently a more difficult and uncertain kind of action. Unfortunately,

we see confirmation of this every day. If we really want to implement fully the primary mandate of the United Nations, which is "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war", we must therefore take more account of the need for prevention in our work, while respecting the principles of the Charter. All actors — Member States, United Nations organs, agencies and programmes, donors, regional organizations and civil society have their role to play.

The report of the Secretary-General gives us an assessment and useful avenues for reflection and action. I wish to highlight three points that emerge from the report and that reaffirm ideas brought out in previous discussions.

First of all is the need to develop a true "culture of prevention", that takes a much longer view of action than is the case today, and that is sufficiently well established across the entire United Nations system, while also bringing in external actors to a greater extent.

It is important, as stressed by the Secretary-General, that not only the United Nations bodies — the Secretary-General, the General Assembly, the Security Council and agencies and programmes such as United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) — but also the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and private actors — non-governmental organizations and enterprises — all acquire a true preventive reflex either to identify and follow up on reliable indicators to mobilize the attention of the international community, or to better design and guide their own actions based on a clear goal of conflict prevention.

Efforts already made and described in the report should be encouraged. The increased trend in UNDP activities towards encouraging good governance and the rule of law, in order to make development projects part of harmonious and sustainable economic and social development, is a step in the right direction. Awareness within the Bretton Woods institutions must also be developed. The United Nations organs could also usefully draw on the proposals contained in the report to create the structures for dialogue and discussion about specific conflict-prevention problems. France hopes that such structures will soon emerge. In due course France will be making its contribution, particularly in the Economic and Social Council, in the General Assembly, or in the Security Council.

Secondly, there should be increased coordination among the various actors in conflict prevention. Given the diversity of the actors involved in the various aspects of conflict prevention policies, coordination is decisive. This is more difficult to promote than peacekeeping or peace-building, because to a certain extent the aspect of gravity or urgency that spurs action is lacking. Mobilizing energies for conflict prevention will depend both on the culture of prevention that I referred to, and on good coordination among the various actors.

Here we must not limit ourselves to the distinction that is sometimes drawn between "operational" measures and "structural" measures for conflict prevention. It does describe the whole range of possible measures within specific time frames. However, in practice, cooperation among all actors concerned will be necessary and proper coordination mechanisms must be established, in particular with the regional organizations and the Bretton Woods institutions.

The third very important point concerns the specific roles played by the Secretary-General and the Security Council. It is important to note that the Charter entrusts special roles in conflict prevention to the Secretary-General and the Council, and it is important to lend our support to the specific proposals made in the report on this subject. The Secretary-General is authorized to bring to the attention of the Security Council, pursuant to Article 99 of the Charter, any given situation that may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security. The periodic reports of the Secretary-General on regional or subregional situations will provide an opportunity to nurture dialogue on this point with the Security Council. There is also a need to strengthen the early warning, reaction and analysis capacities of the Secretariat, so that the Secretary-General can be in a better position to perform this function.

Proposals on this were made in the report of the Secretary-General of 1 June 2001 (A/55/977) on the follow up to the Brahimi report, and they deserve every attention and support on our part. The Security Council has at its disposal a whole range of means that it should use as and when appropriate. Here I would recall Security Council missions, proposals or support for peaceful resolution of disputes, preventive disarmament, preventive arms embargoes, combating illicit trafficking in mineral resources, diamond

embargoes, the creation of demilitarized zones and the preventive deployment of peacekeeping operations, including in the civilian police area. These are all very important avenues.

In conclusion, I wish to say that today's debate is a useful opportunity to recall the shared concerns of Council members on a question that directly affects us all as we discharge our mandate and that should be translated into action and decisions in the months to come. We hope that soon this report will be taken up in the General Assembly so that all competent bodies can be fully involved in this useful and necessary effort.

The President: I thank the representative of France for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): Mr. President, it is an honour and a pleasure to see you presiding over this important meeting. It is also a testimony to Bangladesh's persistent efforts to prevent conflict and promote a culture of peace.

Norway welcomes the Secretary-General's report on conflict prevention. We share his vision that we need to move the United Nations system from a "culture of reaction to a culture of prevention."

In paragraph 165 of the report the Secretary-General states:

> "Most of the factors that stopped the United Nations intervening to prevent genocide in Rwanda remain present today."

We find this fact deeply disturbing. It provides a clear rationale for why conflict prevention must continue to be high on the Council's agenda. There is a need to act more decisively to address looming conflicts where the United Nations can work in concert with regional organizations and initiatives. Too often the signs of escalating conflict are clear to the world community, but action is withheld.

In the following I will provide Norway's views on some of the principal issues in the report. We will comment further on the report during the announced meetings in the General Assembly. Allow me to stress, however, that conflict prevention has to be approached in a comprehensive manner. It is therefore important that while the report is being discussed both in the Council and in the Assembly, it is vital that we do not end up with a United Nations that reacts in a piece-meal manner to issues that are complex and intertwined in the field.

An understanding of the local and underlying causes of each conflict is a fundamental premise for successful prevention. The United Nations presence at the country level is important for the early prevention of conflict. It is also important in ensuring that preventive strategies are based on local initiatives and participation. In our view, there is a need to clarify roles, responsibilities and lines of communication for work in the United Nations system at the country level, in order to secure the best use of existing resources for conflict prevention. The role of the Department of Political Affairs as focal point in the United Nations system for prevention and peace-building makes it paramount that the Department coordinate and cooperate with other departments, funds and agencies. We are pleased to note that the report presents this as an area of priority for the Department.

We agree that preventive action should be initiated at the earliest possible stage of a conflict cycle in order for it to be effective. The role of the funds, programmes and other specialized agencies is crucial in that respect.

The Security Council needs to address conflict prevention in a more systematic manner. We support the recommendation that more active use be made of preventive deployment, and that peace-building components be included in peacekeeping operations.

Timing is key in operational conflict prevention. Financial resources must be available to act swiftly. Norway has supported the Trust Fund for Preventive Action, and we would like to use this opportunity to appeal to other donor countries to provide financial resources to the Fund.

Regional and subregional organizations, such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Economic Community of West African States, are developing their capacity for conflict prevention. These are measures that should be actively supported by the international community. Norway has provided support to the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. Within the broad mandate of Chapter VIII of the Charter, the United Nations should seek to strengthen its cooperation with regional organizations on conflict prevention.

A wide range of cooperative measures are at hand for the United Nations system, such as preventive diplomacy and support for democratic principles, security sector reform and human rights measures. These are, and should be, the main components of preventive strategies. However, those strategies are effective only when conflicts are driven by grievances that can be addressed by such measures, and where there exists a local commitment to peaceful solutions to conflict. We must not be blind to the fact that economic ambition and greed drive many conflicts that constitute a threat to international peace and security. Today, widespread poverty and armed conflict go hand in hand in countries that are rich in resources. How can peace be secured among belligerents that actively seek to undermine efforts to prevent armed conflict? Reducing the profits of war is an important preventive measure. The Council should continue its work to develop more effective measures targeted at the illegal exploitation of natural resources and at related factors that fuel armed conflict. Experience indicates that such measures serve to strengthen rather than to weaken national sovereignty.

The profits of war fuel the illegal trade in small arms. Practical disarmament measures such as "weapons for development" projects and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration are important tools for preventing conflict. We appeal to donor countries to provide the necessary funding for such projects. Norway has supported a wide range of practical disarmament measures, and contributed to the establishment of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Trust Fund on Small Arms. In our view, the United Nations should increase its support for regional measures to curb the illicit trade in small arms.

The first United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects will take place at United Nations Headquarters from 9 to 20 July. It is of prime importance that the conference agree on a programme of action to curb the illicit trade in small arms.

With respect to peace operations, Norway agrees that particular emphasis needs to be placed on the preventive role of civilian police in peace operations. In general, the report (S/2000/809) of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations chaired by Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi was a milestone in providing a unified approach to peace and security. We consider many of its recommendations as key to strengthening the work of the United Nations in preventing conflict. It is of utmost importance that the ongoing deliberations in the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations result in support for strengthening capacity within the Secretariat.

Finally, we welcome the approach taken by the Secretary-General in inviting Member States to participate in developing a road map for the implementation of the specific recommendations in the report. In that respect we, in general, support the proposal for a mechanism under the Security Council to discuss prevention cases on a continuing basis. We believe we should first consider the appropriateness of using existing mechanisms.

As Member States, we need to do more than express our support for the Secretary-General's vision of moving from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention. We must take ownership. The primary responsibility for the peaceful settlement of conflict rests with the national Governments concerned. Without the will for peace, the options for conflict prevention are limited. Furthermore, it is through the leadership of Member States in United Nations organs and in the governing councils of United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies that that change can materialize. Ultimately, these questions are linked to the thorny issues of authority and division of labour within the United Nations system. As conflict prevention transcends the boundaries among the mandates of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council, we as Member States have a particular responsibility to provide for a unified United Nations approach.

The President: I thank the representative of Norway for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine): At the outset, Mr. Azad, I would like to welcome you back to this Chamber. It is our honour and our pleasure to have you presiding over today's important meeting. I wish to express our appreciation to the Bangladesh presidency for convening this meeting on an issue that constitutes one of the main tasks and responsibilities of the United Nations: the prevention of armed conflict.

Let me also thank the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Louise Fréchette, for her introduction of the Secretary-General's report (S/2001/574), which reviews the progress achieved in recent years in

developing the conflict prevention capacity of the United Nations system and which spells out specific recommendations on how to enhance it in cooperation with Member States.

We welcome the report and we commend the Secretary-General for the excellent job done in preparing it. My delegation is impressed with the comprehensive nature of the report, and with its correct philosophical premises, factual data, result-oriented recommendations and forward-looking conclusions. We fully subscribe to the main motto of the Secretary-General's report: that the time has come to translate the rhetoric of conflict prevention into concrete action. In our view, the document represents a remarkable step forward in making the potential of the United Nations for conflict prevention more effective and in moving the international community from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention.

At the same time, since the report is still under thorough consideration in my capital, at this stage I will limit myself to a few preliminary remarks on its content.

Ukraine has been actively advocating the development of reliable preventive United Nations mechanisms for the timely detection and elimination of potential sources of conflict. Most recently, at the Millennium and Security Council summits, the President of Ukraine put forward a proposal to develop a comprehensive United Nations strategy for conflict prevention on the basis of the large-scale use of preventive diplomacy and peace-building.

Against this background, we find that the content of the report is largely in line with the proposal of the President of Ukraine. Specifically, we consider fundamental the 10 principles proposed by the Secretary-General as guidelines for the future approach of the United Nations to conflict prevention, and we support their full application. We believe that these principles lay down solid conceptual foundations for the further elaboration of a comprehensive long-term conflict-prevention strategy for the United Nations and for the international community as a whole.

In the context of the Secretary-General's recommendations on the role of the Security Council, my delegation welcomes his intention to initiate a practice of providing the Council with periodic reports on the regional aspects of conflicts. The Security Council's efforts in conflict settlement in recent years — in particular in the Balkans, the Middle East, West Africa and other parts of the world — clearly testify to the significance of a regional approach to existing problems.

We believe that the recommendation to consider the establishment of new mechanisms of the Security Council to discuss prevention cases on the basis of the Secretary-General's regional reports deserves further examination. In our view, at the initial stage of introducing the practice of submitting periodic regional reports, their consideration can be entrusted to the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations. My delegation also agrees with the view of the Secretary-General that Security Council fact-finding missions can have important preventive effects. Therefore, we are in favour of introducing the same practice of visits to conflict-prone states or potential zones of conflict.

We believe that the Security Council should more frequently resort to its past experience of preventive deployment, with the consent of the host country, of operations in areas of growing tension, as in the case of the United Nations mission in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The unique and successful experience of the United National Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP), which remains the only preventive deployment mission in the history of United Nations peace support efforts, should, in our view, be further exploited and developed, with a view to creating a qualitatively new type of operation: a conflict-prevention operation.

Ukraine, while maintaining its position on the leading role of the Security Council in the prevention of armed conflicts, firmly believes that the task of eliminating the root causes of these conflicts — in particular those of an economic, social or humanitarian nature — falls basically under the competence of other principal United Nations bodies and specialized agencies. In this regard, we subscribe to the Secretary-General's view that a successful preventive strategy depends on the close cooperation of many United Nations actors. In this respect, we look forward to the forthcoming discussion of the Secretary-General's report by the General Assembly on 12 and 13 July.

We feel also that the traditional role of the Secretary-General in discharging his mandate — which is derived from Article 99 of the Charter — through "quiet diplomacy" or "good offices" can be enhanced through the implementation of the four proposals

outlined in his report, all of which we support. In particular, we find useful and constructive the idea of identifying eminent persons to serve as an informal network for advice and action in support of the Secretary-General's efforts to prevent and resolve armed conflicts. Ukraine stands ready to provide a list of candidates for that system. We would also encourage the Secretary-General to resort more actively, in conducting conflict-prevention missions, to the use of special envoys appointed on the basis of a roster of eminent and qualified experts of Member States.

As far as a United Nations regional presence is concerned, we are in favour of the idea of creating United Nations liaison offices at the headquarters of the regional organizations, as was done in Addis Ababa in 1998, to coordinate United Nations conflict-prevention efforts with those of the regional organizations. In our view, this concept should be further developed, with a view to the creation of United Nations regional centres on conflict prevention. In this context, let me recall Ukraine's proposal to set up such a centre under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Ukraine's capital, Kiev.

We also encourage the Secretary-General to take further initiatives as concerns his joint preventive actions with the Security Council. In our view, the recent mission of the Secretary-General to the Middle East serves as a good example of such joint action on conflict prevention, initiated by the Secretary-General on the basis of the mandate given him by the Security Council.

Lastly, my delegation believes that it would be appropriate for the Council to consider following up today's debate in the form of an official document that would accurately reflect the ideas and assessments of the participants in the discussion and endorse the Secretary-General's recommendations.

Ukraine also welcomes the adoption, at the recent European Union summit in Göoteborg, of the European Union programme for the prevention of violent conflicts as a demonstration of the continued commitment of those countries to this important issue.

Finally, let me express our hope that the current open debate, focused on the Secretary-General's report on conflict prevention, will foster the effective implementation of the recommendations contained therein and contribute to the goal of mobilizing the collective potential of the United Nations, its Member States and other international stakeholders in eliminating the threat of the emergence of armed conflicts. Ukraine is determined to continue its efforts to achieve this goal.

The President: I thank the representative of Ukraine for the kind words he addressed to me.

Ms. Lee (Singapore): Sir, the Singapore delegation joins our colleagues in expressing our pleasure at seeing you preside over the debate today. We would also like to thank the Deputy Secretary-General for her concise summary of the crucial points in the Secretary-General's report.

A prodigious amount of work has been done by institutions such as the Carnegie Commission and the International Peace Academy to better define the concept of conflict prevention and identify its many aspects. We also pay tribute to those individual States Members of the United Nations, particularly Sweden, which have also made substantial contributions to promoting a better understanding of this issue.

We look forward to the statements to be made by the non-members of the Council later today and will therefore be brief. As this issue will come up again next month in the General Assembly, we will also confine our comments today to the role of the Security Council.

This is the third open debate of the Security Council on this issue. The Secretary-General has suggested that the time has come for us to translate the rhetoric of conflict prevention into concrete action. We should heed his call and make practical suggestions on how the role of the Security Council in preventing armed conflict could be strengthened.

We need to bear in mind that the Council has by no means an exclusive role. Whatever role is envisaged, it should not be performed in contravention of cardinal principles such as sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States. In this regard, the Secretary-General's report on the prevention of armed conflict is not only comprehensive in scope and conceptual analysis, but also rich in practical suggestions. If each actor could play its role in conflict prevention effectively, we would be well on our way towards establishing a culture of prevention.

With respect to the role of the Security Council, the Secretary-General noted in paragraph 34 of the report before us that the Security Council's

> "focus remains almost exclusively on crises and emergencies, normally becoming involved only when violence has already occurred on a large scale."

This is not only a reflection of the heavy demands on the time and attention of the Council, but also, to be frank, a function of the lack of political will. We should resolve, as a matter of priority, to address the gap between what we say and what we do in the area of conflict prevention. Our credibility depends on how successfully we do this.

Until we can summon political will collectively, our discussions on conflict prevention in this Chamber will remain abstract. In this context, we commend recent efforts of the Secretary-General to play a more active role in conflict prevention and to strengthen the Secretariat's early warning analysis capacities. The Secretary-General's visit to the Middle East and active role in the Middle East process is but the most recent contribution he has made to the ongoing efforts to achieve a just and lasting solution in the Middle East. His involvement demonstrates the United Nations continued commitment to the region and brings a message of hope and promise. In a quiet and effective way, the Secretary-General and his special representatives are also active in numerous missions across the globe aimed primarily at conflict prevention.

In this regard, we welcome the intention of the Secretary-General to present to the Council periodic reports on disputes, which would focus on inter-State issues that could pose a threat to international peace and security and on the Secretary-General's proposals for preventive measures. This would significantly enhance the capacity of the Council to take the appropriate preventive action at the appropriate time.

The President: I thank the representative of Singapore for her kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Kasse (Mali) (*spoke in French*): Allow me, first of all, to perform the pleasant task of expressing to you, Mr. Foreign Minister, my delegation's satisfaction at seeing you presiding over today's meeting and to ask you to convey our thanks to Ambassador Chowdhury for the excellent manner in which he has been guiding the work of the Council this month. We are grateful for the initiative of the Bangladesh delegation to organize this open meeting of the Security Council on the prevention of armed conflicts.

We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his analyses and the relevant and bold recommendations contained in the excellent report before us. We thank Ms. Louise Fréchette, the Deputy Secretary-General, for her introduction of the report.

In his report on the prevention of armed conflicts, the Secretary-General reminds us that the core mission of the United Nations remains "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". However, after more than half a century of existence, it is clear that the United Nations has, basically, sought to ensure collective security by deploying peacekeeping operations, rather than by considering concrete measures to prevent conflicts.

Less than a year ago the Security Council held its second open debate on this important issue. During that meeting, many Member States rightfully emphasized that above all we had to tackle the socio-economic causes of conflict, and they therefore advocated increased development assistance as a way of preventing conflict. Others felt that areas such as defending human rights, good governance, the rule of law and democratization were the main pillars of preventive action.

During the Millennium Summit last September, the heads of State and Government of our global Organization reasserted the relevance of these approaches to conflict prevention. They concluded that the most promising form of prevention was to elaborate integrated, long-term strategies combining a broad range of political, economic, social and other measures to reduce or suppress the causes of conflict.

On that basis, my delegation would like to emphasize that success in preventing armed conflict requires a comprehensive approach involving all the institutions of the United Nations, the Member States, the regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, civil society and business circles. With this as a premise, I would like to highlight the points that, in the opinion of my delegation, and in the context of today's debate, deserve particular attention.

First, following the Secretary-General's lead, I would like to emphasize that the Security Council, according to the Charter of the United Nations, has a

key role to play in preventing conflict. This is why my delegation encourages the Secretary-General in his intention, inter alia, to periodically provide the Security Council with regional and subregional reports on threats to peace and international security, focusing in particular on cross-border problems that might threaten peace and international security, such as illicit trafficking in arms and natural resources, refugees, mercenaries and irregular forces, and the impact of such phenomena on security.

We must be equally supportive of the Secretary-General's recommendation encouraging the Council to consider innovative mechanisms to discuss on a more regular basis the issue of prevention.

In the same vein, my delegation fully supports recommendation 4 of the Secretary-General's report, which proposes that the Economic and Social Council, during its annual substantive session, conduct a high-level debate on the elimination of the root causes of conflict and the role of development in promoting long-term conflict prevention.

My second comment bears on the required cooperation between the United Nations and external actors, in particular regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, civil society and business circles. Here, the Secretary-General's report aptly reminds us that for some years now some regional organizations have possessed new institutional capacities for early warning and conflict prevention. This is the case with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), to mention only two. They have set up their own mechanisms for the prevention, management and settlement of conflicts. In 1999, in the framework of effective conflict prevention, ECOWAS created a monitoring system for peace and subregional security. This system is called the early warning system or, simply, "the system". This system includes a monitoring and follow-up centre based at the ECOWAS secretariat headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria. Its mission is to establish cooperative links between the United Nations, the OAU, research centres and any other relevant international, regional and subregional organization. The system also involves monitoring and follow-up zones for the subregion. Thus, on the basis of proximity, ease of communication and effectiveness, the member States of ECOWAS have set up four monitoring and follow-up zones under the auspices of offices opened at Banjul, Ouagadougou, Monrovia and Cotonou.

But the political will of the authorities of the continent and of the West African subregion requires the support and assistance of the international community. This is why my delegation supports the Secretary-General's recommendation number 26, which calls on Member States to support the follow-up processes launched by the Third and Fourth High-level United Nations-Regional Organizations Meetings to improve conflict prevention and peace-building, and to provide increased resources for developing regional capacities in this field.

On this occasion I would like to reiterate Mali's support for the Secretary-General's recommendation, based on the report of the Inter-Agency Task Force on West Africa, regarding the establishment of a United Nations office in West Africa that could reinforce the organization's capacity for early warning, conflict prevention, peace-building, reporting and policy development, as well as enhance cooperation with the Economic Community of West African States and other subregional organizations.

My third and last comment is to draw attention to the fact that if we wish to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, we must combat the pathetic spectacle of child soldiers. My delegation therefore suggests that we draft a more restrictive set of international provisions in this regard. We invite Member States to sign and ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted in May 2000. In this context we wish to restate Mali's full support for the proposals made by the Prime Minister of Bangladesh at the second Security Council summit, on 7 September 2000, relating to the creation of areas free of child soldiers in conflict-prone areas.

In conclusion, we would like to express our agreement with the Secretary-General's statement that the time has come to intensify our efforts in order to progress from a culture of reaction towards a culture of prevention. The prevention of violent conflict is surely less costly than post-conflict remedy. And surely the international community is already well enough informed about certain latent crises throughout the world. What we have to do is act, and act now.

The President: I thank the representative of Mali for his kind words addressed to me, to our Permanent Representative, Mr. Chowdhury, and to my country.

Mr. Neewoor (Mauritius): It is a great honour to have you, Mr. Foreign Minister, preside over our open debate today on the prevention of armed conflict, which is a subject of highest concern to all of us in the United Nations. We thank Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury for holding this open discussion on this important subject today. We also thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for providing us with a very comprehensive and highly imaginative report on the subject. The report not only addresses the subject in a very analytical way, but more importantly, makes a number of recommendations which merit serious consideration by both the Security Council and the General Assembly.

The Secretary-General has made the following extremely important assertions at the very outset of his report. First of all, there is a need to move the United Nations from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention. Secondly, we must now move from the rhetoric of prevention to the full implementation stage. My delegation concurs fully with these assertions. The nature and characteristics of conflicts have changed over the years since the United Nations was founded over half a century ago. Conflicts in our times are largely within States rather than between States, and these have to be dealt with differently from the ways in which conflicts between States are addressed under the United Nations Charter.

We were privileged to take part in the recent Security Council missions to the Congo and the Great Lakes region, as well as the mission to Kosovo last week under the leadership of Ambassador Chowdhury. We had the opportunity to have a closer look at the conflicts which afflict these areas, and we have come back convinced, more than ever before, that these conflicts would have been avoidable through timely action at the national level, with the support of the international community. We believe that the same is true in respect of most civil conflicts. We share the view of the Secretary-General that the primary responsibility for conflict prevention rests with national Governments.

Let us see what the root causes of civil conflicts are. In our view, the seeds of civil strife can invariably be found in places where Governments lack legitimacy, where governance is weak or unrepresentative, where irrational values such as fundamentalism, racism, tribalism, ethnic discrimination, social injustice, and violation of human rights are practised officially or unofficially. These are matters which concern the national Governments themselves, and the international community can reasonably expect responsible Governments to address such issues internally in a manner that has the general support of the people.

The seeds of conflict also lie in poverty, underdevelopment and conditions of economic and social inequality. These problems are normally difficult to deal with at the national level alone. International and United Nations support are crucial in terms of the resources and know-how needed for the development of economic and social infrastructures that help alleviate the problem of unemployment as well. We must not forget that underdevelopment tends to become the breeding ground for social frustration, which culminates in armed struggles and uncontrolled violence.

I shall now make some observations on the recommendations of the Secretary-General on the prevention of conflict.

With regard to early warning systems, the Secretary-General has referred on a number of occasions in his report to the various possibilities of obtaining early warning information from United Nations agencies. While the collection of such information is no doubt helpful, it is equally important that proper strategies be developed within the United Nations system with a view to addressing the issue at its embryonic stage so as to avoid the occurrence of indiscriminate violence prior to any action being taken by the United Nations.

In connection with preventive deployment operations, we welcome the proposal of the Secretary-General in favour of a United Nations preventive deployment operation as a symbol of the international community's interest and as a source of leverage to promote peace and stability. Such deployment as the Secretary-General suggests may make a crucial contribution, as opposed to the traditional peacekeeping mission, which is not present when the conflict erupts and cannot therefore save lives and promote stability in the initial stages of an armed conflict. It is only through comprehensive and coherent conflict prevention strategies that the greatest potential for promoting peace can be achieved and a suitable environment for sustainable development can be created.

As part of the Secretary-General's strategy to prevent armed conflicts, my delegation fully subscribes to the idea of fielding fact-finding missions, such as the inter-agency mission that visited several countries in West Africa recently. The report of the mission provides an integrated approach to the political, economic, social and humanitarian problems existing in the countries visited. It is encouraging to note that the mission has come up with concrete recommendations to address the problems faced by countries of the region in a comprehensive manner. Such missions should be encouraged to visit regions affected by underdevelopment, where the potential for armed conflicts to occur might remain high.

As to the role of the Economic and Social Council in conflict prevention, as an integrated approach aimed at achieving sustainable peace and preventing armed conflicts, we fully concur with the Secretary-General that a future high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council's annual meeting be devoted to the question of addressing the root causes of conflict and the role of development in promoting long-term conflict prevention. A greater involvement of the Economic and Social Council in areas related to the elimination of the root causes of conflict should be encouraged. The assessment mission of the Economic and Social Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti, of which I had the privilege to be a member, provided first-hand information on the efforts undertaken to address the core issues that could assist in establishing lasting peace in Haiti.

The importance of the role of regional organizations in conflict prevention has been reiterated on several occasions in this Chamber. We commend the positive role played by regional and subregional organizations, such as the Organization of African Unity, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community, in their efforts to prevent armed conflicts. The early warning stations established by ECOWAS in West Africa provide an excellent example of the determination of the subregional organization to address the issue of armed conflict at the earliest stage of its occurrence. More resources, technical and material alike, should be made available to regional organizations in their endeavours to prevent armed conflict. The moratorium on arms imposed by ECOWAS serves as another example of the efforts to curb armed conflicts in Africa.

It is undeniable that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons has, over the past decade, been a major cause of concern in various conflict-prone regions. Measures to prevent the misuse and illicit transfer of small arms will inevitably contribute to the prevention of conflicts. Disarmament should be an ongoing process, particularly in conflict-prone societies. We look forward to the adoption of a comprehensive programme of action to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons during the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects next month. My delegation also fully supports programmes, such as "weapons for development", which are aimed at the retrieval and collection of illegal weapons in exchange for community-based development incentives. These programmes have been successful in some regions and should be encouraged on a wider scale.

As regards the role of the Security Council in the prevention of armed conflicts, the Secretary-General reminds the Council that, according to Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter:

> "The Security Council may investigate any dispute, or any situation which might lead to international friction or give rise to a dispute".

The Secretary-General also draws attention to the fact that the Security Council normally becomes involved only when violence has already occurred on a large scale. It is time that the Security Council pay attention to the comments of the Secretary-General and dedicate itself to playing a more constructive role in the prevention of armed conflicts. In this regard, we welcome the initiative of the Secretary-General to submit periodic regional or subregional reports to the Security Council on threats to international peace and security.

My delegation commends the Secretary-General for the important role he plays through quiet diplomacy and the use of his good offices in the prevention of armed conflicts. There is no doubt that he has achieved very positive results. My delegation encourages him in his efforts and supports his actions for the prevention and resolution of armed conflicts wherever they occur.

Finally, my delegation fully supports the 10 principles laid down in the Secretary-General's report, which are aimed at intensifying the efforts of the United Nations to move from a culture of reaction to a

culture of prevention. My delegation, however, wishes to highlight the following principle:

> "Conflict prevention and sustainable and equitable development are mutually reinforcing activities. An investment in national and international efforts for conflict prevention must be seen as a simultaneous investment in sustainable development since the latter can best take place in an environment of sustainable peace." (*S/2001/574, para. 169*)

This principle, according to my delegation, remains at the core of our efforts in the prevention of conflicts.

The President: I thank the representative of Mauritius for his kind words addressed to me and to Mr. Chowdhury.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh.

The report submitted by the Secretary-General on the prevention of armed conflict has received my Government's very high appreciation. We agree with the Deputy Secretary-General that this first-ever report should provide the basis for an in-depth discussion here at the Council and throughout the United Nations system.

The deliberations at our meeting today will provide necessary political direction and inputs for Council action. In the General Assembly, we shall, of course, give further consideration to the observations and recommendations of the report for a United Nations system-wide approach to conflict prevention. The role of the Bretton Woods institutions would be crucial. Our debate here should also aim at encouraging the support of the regional organizations and arrangements, the non-governmental organizations and the private sector. I wish to underline three points.

First, as to the question of responsibility, the Security Council must assume its primary responsibility in the maintenance of international peace and security. This will mean resolute action to prevent threats to peace, breaches of peace and acts of aggression. This will also mean timely and effective intervention to prevent genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. We must not witness another preventable genocide, such as that in Rwanda, or another preventable massacre, such as that in Srebrenica.

During our debate on humanitarian aspects of issues before the Council, in March 2000, we put emphasis on human security. The United Nations was established in the name of the people. Their security should be prime in our consideration when we deal with war and peace.

At the Council summit last year, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hisaka, said that conflict prevention is a political, economic, humanitarian, and moral imperative. It is political, because conflicts disrupt inter-State relations, adversely, affecting the climate of cooperation at regional and international levels. It is economic, because the cost of war is so enormous for the international community. The Carnegie Commission report estimated the cost of the seven major conflicts of the 1990s at $200 billion. It is humanitarian and moral, because conflicts result in humanitarian disasters in the form of death and destruction, mass killings, gross violation of human rights and humanitarian law, and untold suffering for men, women, and children.

Second is the question of political will. The effective discharge of the Council's responsibilities will require political will on the part of Member States. They will have to accept human and material sacrifices. They should be prepared to support the actions of the United Nations in the maintenance of peace and security. Providing support for the peace and security mission of the United Nations is a Charter obligation, not charity. In a globalizing world, as the Secretary-General stresses in paragraph 164 of his report, "collective interest is the national interest". In order to be effective, we agree that the Council must be able to make decisions on the basis of what the situation requires — not on the basis of what some members are willing to support.

Thirdly, we should consider the sources of conflict. The key to prevention lies in addressing the sources or root causes of conflicts. The April 1998 report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict in Africa identified the major sources of conflicts. In his analysis, the sources of many of the conflicts on the continent include colonial and cold-war legacies. It is hence a natural conclusion that special responsibility has to be assumed by those concerned. They can play a crucial role in helping them address the political, economic, and social challenges in these societies.

A related aspect is the absence of democratic institutions. Autocratic regimes, the politicization of ethnicity, denial of fundamental freedoms and human rights, and monopolization of political power and national resources are often at the root of conflicts. These factors have resulted in the failure of States. At the Council summit last year, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina called for international protection of democracy, because we share the conviction that democracy, rule of law, human rights, and good governance constitute the foundation of durable peace.

The Secretary-General underlines that conflict prevention and sustainable development are mutually reinforcing. Our common understanding of this complementarity will be crucial for a United Nations system-wide comprehensive approach to conflict prevention.

The various plans and programmes of action adopted in the 1990s cycle of international conferences elaborate the agenda for our common humanity. Unfortunately, the review conferences reveal a serious gap between commitment and action. The desired progress in their implementation would have covered a lot of ground towards the prevention of armed conflicts. Translating words into deeds would have made the difference. In many cases, it will make the difference between war and peace.

Mr. Duval (Canada) (*spoke in French*): We welcome your presence, Mr. Foreign Minister, at this important debate. Canada welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the prevention of armed conflict, introduced this morning by the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Louise Fréchette, this morning. It is a thorough and well-crafted report that makes clear the progress that has been achieved in developing our Organization's capacity to prevent armed conflict, while also providing practical recommendations on how that capacity can be further enhanced. We will participate wholeheartedly in efforts to give life to the report.

As the Secretary-General states, conflict prevention is at the moral heart of the mandate of the United Nations, as expressed in the Charter and throughout more than 55 years of efforts to maintain international peace and security for the people of the whole world. Member States have primary responsibility for preventing violent conflict, and they have a key role to play in strengthening our collective capacity to avoid future tragedies like those in Rwanda and Srebrenica.

Preventing the outbreak and escalation of armed conflict requires action by both the General Assembly and the Security Council. We must identify ways for these two organs better to coordinate their efforts in this area. We should not lose time to jurisdictional arguments. There is urgent work to be done by both bodies.

Other actors, such as regional organizations, the international financial institutions and civil society, also have an important role to play in supporting the efforts of Member States to strengthen their capacity to respond to factors such as exclusion and inequality, which, if left unchecked, can spark violent confrontations.

Appropriately, the report also recognizes the positive role the private sector can play in promoting conflict prevention and sustainable human development. Corporate and other non-State actors can prolong and intensify war by, for example, engaging in illicit trade in natural resources. But they can also play a positive role and help stave off conflict by, for example, providing employment to young people who might otherwise be tempted to take up arms. Canada supports further study into the positive roles the private sector can play in vulnerable conflict-prone areas, including through conflict prevention activities such as early warning and post-conflict reconstruction.

Effective conflict prevention is as much an issue of economics and governance as it is of diplomacy. It requires engagement over the long term, beginning with the moment when the possibility of armed conflict appears and continuing throughout the period when the embers of conflict risk being reignited. Emergency assistance, reconstruction and peace-building all form part of conflict prevention.

(*spoke in English*)

Next month, Member States will have an opportunity to achieve real progress in an area vital to the prevention and mitigation of armed conflict: controlling the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We share the Secretary-General's conviction that small arms proliferation is not simply a security issue but also an issue of human rights and development, and we agree that measures to address

the demand for, and misuse of, small arms and light weapons are necessary to prevent armed conflict.

We therefore support a comprehensive approach to the July 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. It is essential that there be broad support among Member States for practical disarmament measures. Canada echoes the call for greater participation by Member States in disarmament-related early warning and transparency mechanisms as well as for the inclusion of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration provisions in the mandates of United Nations peacekeeping and peace-building operations, where appropriate. It is particularly important that these recommendations are reflected in the programme for action of the July 2001 United Nations Conference.

The Secretary-General's report also underscores the need for a gender-sensitive approach to conflict prevention and peace-building efforts on the part of the Security Council and the United Nations as a whole. Canada is firmly committed to the implementation of the Security Council's landmark resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security. We also strongly agree that a gender-sensitive approach, with the full and equal participation of women in the planning and implementation of peace support operations, will contribute to more effective United Nations missions.

A gender-sensitive approach to peace support operations requires appropriate training. Over the past two years, Canada and the United Kingdom have developed a Gender Training Initiative — GTI — for military and civilian personnel involved in peace support operations. The materials continue to be a work in progress and continue to be available to the United Nations and Member States.

Canada also recognizes the importance of addressing the situation of war-affected children. Children are not only victims in today's conflicts but, sometimes, are also perpetrators of violence. The International Conference on War-Affected Children held last September in Winnipeg, Canada, produced an agenda for war-affected children that outlines priorities for international action. Many of these are reflected in this report of the Secretary-General. The General Assembly special session on children to be held in September 2001 provides another opportunity to work towards broadly defined conflict prevention.

Finally, Canada strongly supports the suggestion by the President of the General Assembly that following the Assembly's discussion of this report next month, a short procedural resolution be adopted forwarding the report to all relevant organs within the United Nations system and other relevant actors for their consideration and further recommendations. These bodies should also be invited to report back to the Assembly during its fifty-sixth session, at which time the Assembly could consider the report and all recommendations in a comprehensive manner.

We support generally the recommendations made by the Secretary-General and look forward to discussing them more fully at the time of the General Assembly debate.

The President: There are a number of speakers remaining on my list. In view of the lateness of the hour, and with the concurrence of the members of the Council, I intend to suspend the meeting now and to resume it at 3 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1.15 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4334 (Resumption 1)

Provisional

Security Council

Fifty-sixth year

4334th meeting

Thursday, 21 June 2001, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Azad	(Bangladesh)
Members:	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	Colombia	Mr. Franco
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Ireland	Mr. Ryan
	Jamaica	Miss Durrant
	Mali	Mr. Kasse
	Mauritius	Mr. Neewoor
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Granovsky
	Singapore	Ms. Lee
	Tunisia	Mr. Jerandi
	Ukraine	Mr. Kuchinsky
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

Role of the Security Council in the prevention of armed conflicts

Report of the Secretary-General on the prevention of armed conflict (S/2001/574).

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

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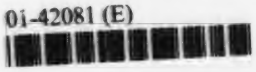

The meeting resumed at 3.20 p.m.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Nepal in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Bhattari (Nepal) took a seat at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Sweden. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Schori (Sweden): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus and Malta, as well as the European Free Trade Association country Iceland, align themselves with this statement.

Conflict prevention lies at the heart of the mandate of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security. In its presidential statement of July 2000, this Council underlined the overriding humanitarian and moral imperative as well as the economic advantages of preventing the outbreak and escalation of conflicts. Over the last couple of years, the Security Council has paid increasing attention to the significance of preventive activities and to the need to create a culture of prevention. The report by the Secretary-General on the prevention of armed conflict, before us today, mirrors the commitment on the part of the Security Council, as well as of the wider United Nations system and its Member States, to strengthen our collective measures in this field.

The European Union commends the Secretary-General for his long-standing effort to move the United Nations from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention. We warmly welcome his recent report as part of that effort, appreciating its thorough review of progress achieved in developing the conflict-prevention strategy of the United Nations, as well as the report's many concrete recommendations for further improvements. One of the report's particular strengths lies in its comprehensive approach and its emphasis on the importance of coordination and cooperation between the wide range of actors to ensure effective preventive strategies. As the Secretary-General points out, many United Nations actors — as well as the Bretton Woods institutions, Member States, international and regional organizations, civil society and the private sector — have important roles to play.

Improving coordination is vital for effective prevention. The European Union recently adopted a programme for the prevention of violent conflicts, in which cooperation with the United Nations is a prominent feature. The programme declares that European Union (EU) actions will be undertaken in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter, in keeping with the primary role of the United Nations in conflict prevention. It recalls that the main responsibility for conflict prevention rests with the parties concerned and reiterates the importance of local and regional capacity-building. Also, it stipulates that the European Union will set out clear political priorities for preventive actions, improve its early warning, action and policy coherence, and enhance its instruments for long- and short-term prevention.

The EU programme, like the Secretary-General's report, emphasizes moreover the need to build and sustain effective and mutually reinforcing partnerships for prevention, between the United Nations system, regional and subregional organizations and civil society. To this end, and in line with the modalities for such cooperation agreed on by the High-level United Nations-Regional Organizations Meeting in July 1998, the European Union has recently adopted guidelines for an intensified interaction with the United Nations in the areas of conflict prevention and crisis management. Specific themes for this cooperation include regional issues, civilian and military aspects of crisis management and, in the particular field of conflict prevention, exchange of information, cooperation on fact-finding, coordination of diplomatic activity and field coordination and training.

The Secretary-General's report contains close to 30 recommendations, aimed at mobilizing the

collective potential of the United Nations system, with greater coherence and focus on conflict prevention. The recommendations are pertinent and wise, and several of them can be implemented without requiring additional resources. For example, the European Union supports the proposal for closer interaction between the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, and considers that practical arrangements for this should not be hard to find.

Noting that the recommendations are addressed to a wide range of organs and actors, the European Union looks forward to elaborating its position when the proposals are dealt with in the various relevant forums. The deliberations in the General Assembly, envisaged for mid-July, will provide an opportunity to present at greater length and in more detail the comprehensive position of the European Union on the totality of the Secretary-General's recommendations. In that connection, we stand ready to participate in the development of a practical road map to implement the specific recommendations contained in the report, as proposed by the Secretary-General.

However, the report also contains a number of interesting recommendations addressed specifically to this Council. The European Union notes with satisfaction statements made by Security Council members in today's debate indicating their willingness to take action in follow-up to the Secretary-General's report. The European Union believes that these recommendations merit close attention, including the proposal that the Security Council consider some innovative mechanisms for discussions on prevention cases on a continuing basis, with regard either to reports submitted by the Secretary-General or to early warning or other prevention cases brought to the Council's attention by Member States.

In this connection, we recall the crucial role given the Secretary-General in Article 99 of the United Nations Charter: to bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security. The intention of the Secretary-General to initiate a practice of providing periodic regional and subregional reports to the Security Council is important in that regard. As to the contributions by Member States, the European Union notes with appreciation the innovative and valuable provision in the recent Security Council resolution on the Democratic Republic of the Congo requesting both the Secretary-General and Member States to make proposals on how to address the interrelated crises in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Other important recommendations addressed to the Security Council, among others, include to make more active use of preventive deployments before the onset of conflict; to support peace-building components within peacekeeping operations; to include a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration component in the mandates of United Nations peacekeeping and peace-building operations; to make full use of information and analyses emanating from the United Nations human rights mechanisms and bodies; to invite the Office of the Emergency Relief Coordinator to brief the Council on situations where there is a substantial risk of a humanitarian emergency, and to call for and support the implementation of preventive protection and assistance activities by United Nations agencies in such situations; and to give greater attention to gender perspectives in its conflict-prevention and peace-building activities.

These are all useful and practical proposals with the potential to enhance notably the capacity of the Security Council in the field of prevention, and to mirror the European Union's own efforts to enhance its own conflict-prevention and crisis-management capabilities. The European Union encourages the Security Council to consider carefully these recommendations as well as possible complementary and additional measures.

The Secretary-General points to several important principles for replacing the prevailing culture of reaction with a culture of prevention. Among them, the European Union notes in particular that conflict prevention is one of the primary obligations of Member States set forth in the United Nations Charter. Other core principles include that prevention should be in conformity with international law and that will not be successful without local ownership and a firm commitment to its principles by national actors. As the Secretary-General points out, early action taken nationally to alleviate conditions that could lead to armed conflict can help strengthen the sovereignty of States.

The European Union considers that conflict prevention calls for a cooperative approach to facilitate peaceful solutions to disputes, and that preventive

strategies should be developed so that action can be initiated at the earliest possible stage of a conflict cycle. In that way, actions can be most effective and, ideally, large-scale operations can be avoided. The European Union looks forward to working with other Member States in developing such strategies. Conflict prevention efforts create an environment that reinforces sustained and equitable development, and vice versa. As the Secretary-General points out, investing in conflict prevention offers the potential for multiple returns for national development over the longer term.

The report also highlights the comprehensive nature of conflict prevention, involving operational and structural elements, and short- and long-term measures. An effective preventive strategy requires that deep-rooted socio-economic, cultural, environmental, institutional and structural causes be addressed. And it entails political, diplomatic, humanitarian, human rights, developmental, institutional and other measures. In this context, the European Union stresses the importance of adherence to international law, not least the conventions on human rights and international refugee law, and reiterates that applying the rule of law in relations between States and ensuring respect for human rights reduce the risk of violent conflict. Good governance, basic principles of democracy and transparency, and the responsibility and commitment of political leaders are similarly important elements in the context of conflict prevention.

Finally, in his report the Secretary-General recalls that the United Nations has a moral responsibility to ensure that genocides such as that perpetrated in Rwanda are prevented from ever happening again. History has taught us — at times through horrendous lessons — our shortcomings. But the present also reveals that preventing widespread human suffering remains a commanding challenge for individual States and our collective organ, the United Nations. We, the Member States, must improve our common understanding and approach, build and support sustained political will and commitment, and increase our readiness to take action, combining in creative and coordinated ways the tools at our disposal. The European Union recognizes the dimensions of the task but remains convinced that progress can, and must, be made.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of the Republic of Korea. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table to make his statement.

Mr. Sun Joun-yung (Republic of Korea): At the outset I would like to welcome you, Mr. Minister, and express my deep gratitude to you for handling this open debate on the prevention of armed conflict.

As the Secretary-General emphasized in his report, the primary responsibility for preventing conflict lies with nations themselves. However, in an age when we are facing ever-increasing challenges related to international peace and security, the role of the United Nations is becoming more and more pivotal. We firmly believe that the prevention of such conflicts largely hinges on the preventive capacity of the United Nations and its Member States. Indeed, conflict prevention lies at the heart of the United Nations mandate for the maintenance of international peace and security, which emphasizes the Organization's mission "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war".

My delegation fully supports the Secretary-General's intention to move the United Nations from a "culture of reaction" to a "culture of prevention," a notion that is closely tied to the vision of a "culture of peace." As has been made evident by the conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, Kosovo and East Timor in recent years, United Nations efforts to resolve conflicts once they have already escalated are often futile. But while it is generally acknowledged that conflict prevention is far more cost-effective, in both human and financial terms, than post-conflict management, the political will and financial commitment of Member States are often elusive in the earliest stages of conflicts.

Furthermore, as the Secretary-General noted in his report, while a large number of Member States have expressed their support for conflict prevention during previous open debates, they often have different priorities for action. In this regard, the Republic of Korea favours a comprehensive approach that encompasses democratization, respect for human rights and the rule of law, socio-economic development and the promotion of good governance.

I would like to comment on a few of the issues raised in the Secretary-General's report that are of particular importance to my delegation.

First, my delegation fully agrees with the Secretary-General's recommendations for strengthening the capacities of the principal United Nations organs for conflict prevention. In particular, we support the

recommendation that the General Assembly consider a more active use of its powers in the prevention of armed conflict and explore ways of enhancing its interaction with the Security Council in developing long-term conflict prevention and peace-building strategies. Greater interaction between the General Assembly and the Security Council would enhance transparency and ensure that the views of the Member States on conflict prevention are heard.

Secondly, my delegation notes that the broader, more holistic approach to conflict prevention has emerged in response to the growing realization that sustainable peace cannot be achieved without addressing the structural root causes of conflicts. In fact, the most effective form of conflict prevention may be the pursuit of sustainable development and democratization, areas in which the Economic and Social Council can and should play a more active role. In this regard, the multifaceted nature of conflict prevention requires enhanced cooperation within the United Nations system, particularly among the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

Thirdly, recognizing that a stable social environment is key to preventing the outbreak or recurrence of a conflict, my delegation supports the Secretary-General's recommendation that we devote greater resources to the United Nations humanitarian agencies and integrate preventive activities into the work of these agencies in pre-crisis situations. In particular, we stress the need to advocate for the protection and welfare of women and children and to mobilize international support for the fight against HIV/AIDS. My delegation looks forward to the special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS next week and to the special session on children this September and hopes that they will bring forth tangible results.

Fourthly, my delegation believes that the United Nations should continue to strengthen its relationship with a wide array of international actors, particularly regional organizations, and pursue regional preventive strategies. We recognize that, due to their proximity, regional organizations are often more attuned to the situation on the ground and can therefore develop effective institutional capacities for early warning and conflict prevention, such as the mechanisms established by the Organization of African Unity and the Economic Community of West African States. For this reason, we are looking forward to the implementation of the follow-up measures to the Fourth High-level United Nations-Regional Organizations Meeting on conflict prevention and peace-building, held last February.

Fifthly, as the Brahimi report recommends the Secretary-General's more frequent use of fact-finding missions to areas of tension in support of short-term crisis-prevention action, we firmly support the enhancement of the preventive role of the Secretary-General. In this regard, we believe that the allocation of adequate financial resources for conflict prevention is essential. For its part, the Republic of Korea has contributed to the Trust Fund for Preventive Action since its inception in 1997 and intends to maintain this commitment.

I would like to conclude by reiterating my Government's unwavering support for efforts to enhance the preventive capacities of the United Nations, Member States and key international players. We hope that this debate will mobilize Member States towards a more effective strategy for conflict prevention.

The President: The next speaker on my list is the representative of Argentina. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Listre (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): May I begin by thanking you, Sir, for your presence at this debate. I also want to commend the delegation of Bangladesh for the way in which it has presided over the work of the Security Council this month with great efficiency and transparency.

I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his recent report on the prevention of armed conflict. We agree with his basic premise that we must move from a culture of reaction to one of prevention.

The prevention of armed conflict is a very broad subject because it involves different actors from both within and outside the United Nations. Given the fact that the issue will also be discussed in the General Assembly, in this forum I will focus on the Security Council's preventive role and on the need to coordinate this task with the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. I will also refer to the deterrent role of the international criminal Tribunals.

We believe that the starting point of our analysis is the new concept of international security that has evolved since the end of the cold war. This new

concept requires the Security Council to re-examine the way in which it deals with the kinds of conflicts that the founders of our Organization had not envisaged. The majority of the conflicts of the post-cold-war era are domestic, with international repercussions. They emerge from complex and diverse causes, ranging from economic to ethnic and religious questions. The targets are no longer exclusively of a military nature. In many cases, the civilian population has become the main victim.

In this context, the role of prevention requires the Security Council to be aware of the deep-seated causes of all such conflicts. The Council does not always have such an awareness. That is why we believe that there are three specific instruments that could help the Council better to assess the pre-conflict situation and thus improve its decision-making process. Those instruments are already being used by the Council in conflict management. We feel that the challenge now is to use them more frequently in conflict prevention.

First, close and substantive cooperation is necessary between the Council and the regional and subregional organizations. We believe it important for the Council to convene regular meetings with high-ranking political officers of those organizations in order to exchange opinions and information. Last February, the Council met with the Lusaka Political Committee in connection with the situation in the Great Lakes region and with the Committee of Six of the Economic Community of West African States in connection with Sierra Leone. This trend towards a more fluid dialogue is undoubtedly positive and should be encouraged, but it is being implemented as a conflict-management tool. We believe that such meetings should also be convened in order to assess latent or potential conflicts.

Secondly, these comments apply to Security Council missions. Since September 1999, there has been a resumption of Council missions to affected countries. These missions are very positive because they allow the Council to gain direct knowledge of the reality of a conflict concerning which they will later be called to make decisions. We think that these missions must also be carried out with a preventive purpose in pre-conflict situations, with the consent of the parties concerned. That is why we deemed it important that, during the Council's mission in May to the Great Lakes region to address the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it took the decision to include Burundi — where there is a risk of full-scale confrontation — in its planned itinerary. The mission met with the facilitator of the peace process, former South African President Nelson Mandela, President Buyoya of Burundi and President Mkapa of Tanzania.

The third point that I wish to stress is the need for direct dialogue between the Security Council and the parties concerned. The practice of holding private meetings with the parties — which started to gain momentum in late 1999 — is, in our opinion, a step in the right direction. We also think that, in particular circumstances, the parties directly affected should have the opportunity to participate in the Council's informal consultations. The access of the parties to a conflict to the Security Council is a fundamental issue that deserves the Council's careful consideration, since it touches on the transparency and efficiency of its decision-making process. There is no doubt that conflict prevention is mostly viewed as a Chapter VI issue. However, in our view, conflict prevention does not preclude, in some specific cases, the application of Chapter VII of the Charter. We think that in some of the conflicts currently on the agenda of the Council, the application of an arms embargo in an early stage of the conflict would have helped prevent its worsening.

Information as to what is really happening on the ground is essential in any effective preventive action; without it the early warning systems can operate only with difficulty. Availability of information is necessary for successful preventive action, but it is not enough. It must be accompanied by the political will to act. When such political will existed, the Council deployed preventive peacekeeping operations in Macedonia and the Central African Republic. On other occasions, such as during the conflict in Rwanda in 1994, the genocide could have been avoided if certain members of the Council had garnered the political will to act. In the case of Rwanda, information was available.

Prevention also means creating the proper conditions for the rule of law, human rights, and coexistence, including religious tolerance, productive investments, access to health care, and equal economic and educational opportunities. This concept of prevention — which deals with the root causes of conflict, not the immediate ones — is a task for the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). We believe that this task must be carried out in cooperation and coordination with the Security Council.

I would like to refer very briefly to the relation between the Security Council and Economic and Social Council. Even before the San Francisco Conference, the framers of the Charter had wisely established, in Dumbarton Oaks, a link between ECOSOC and Security Council through Article 65 of the Charter. Subsequent practice tells us, however, that only on one occasion, in 1949, did the Economic and Social Council, through the Secretary-General, convey to the Security Council the result of its deliberations on human rights in Palestine. Only once, in 1950, did the Security Council request a report from the Economic and Social Council on the civilian population in Korea. We think it is high time to revitalize Article 65 of the Charter.

Given that most of the conflicts on the Security Council's present agenda do not relate to conventional territorial disputes, but rather to ethnic reasons, religious intolerance, abject poverty, control over natural resources or systematic violations of human rights, an opportunity is created for the Economic and Social Council to cooperate with the Security Council through recommendations conducive to conflict prevention, an area which traditionally had seemed to be outside its sphere of competence. That is why we believe it would have been very useful to hold the joint Security Council — ECOSOC meeting proposed last April, during the United Kingdom Presidency. It would have signified the beginning of a dialogue among two of the principal bodies of the United Nations with the shared purpose of contributing to the peaceful settlement of conflicts.

We all agree on the need to coordinate the work of the Security Council, the General Assembly, and the Economic and Social Council. I think we also need to reflect upon the issue of who is going to implement such coordination. We believe we must explore the possibility of a role for the Secretary-General in this regard.

Justice is an indispensable component of peace. In this context, the International Criminal Tribunals are another instrument for conflict prevention because they provide the perception that crimes against humanity, such as the ones committed in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone, will not go unpunished. The work of these Tribunals must be fully supported. We think that the entering into force of the Rome Statute will have an important deterrent effect.

Prevention is a joint enterprise, which involves, with differing levels of responsibility, various actors: national governments, the United Nations, regional and subregional organizations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. These actors must perform their activities in a coordinated manner, and not in a competitive or exclusive fashion. We believe this to be one of the main messages from the report of the Secretary-General.

Finally, and above all, no preventive action will be effective unless the parties to a conflict have the political will to live the objectives of peace, reconstruction and development as their own objectives, and unless the international community, for its part, has the political will to support the prevention efforts, patiently and with the needed resources.

The President: I thank the representative of Argentina for his kind words addressed to me and to Mr. Chowdhury.

The next speaker is the representative of Costa Rica. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Niehaus (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, may I first of all congratulate you and, through you, the Republic of Bangladesh on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of June. We are aware of and grateful for the leadership that your delegation, under the direction of Ambassador Chowdhury, has been exercising in the defence of the interests and the positions of the developing countries within this important body. I also want to thank the Secretary-General for his valuable report on the prevention of armed conflict. We also appreciate the introduction provided to us this morning by the Deputy Secretary-General.

We trust that this report will be the subject of a broad discussion in each of the organs of the United Nations. Therefore on this occasion I will emphasize only those aspects that relate to the activities of the Security Council itself, while in the months to come we hope to discuss the relevant sections in the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

My delegation agrees completely with the Secretary-General that the United Nations and the international community have the essential moral obligation to prevent armed conflict and other threats to international peace and security. This obligation

stems not only from the fundamental provisions of the United Nations Charter, but also from the basic principles of solidarity and fraternity among all human beings. This means that we cannot continue to be passive witnesses to innumerable acts of genocide, to massacres and to wars.

The promotion of peace requires a continued and sustained effort to create an environment of mutual respect and of rejection of violence. A genuine and sustainable peace can be achieved only when proper living conditions are insured for all our inhabitants and when there is a sufficient level of economic development for everyone to meet his basic needs, when fundamental human rights are respected and when social and political differences are resolved through democratic channels.

For this reason, early prevention of armed conflict means that we must confront the profound structural causes of crises. The effective prevention of conflicts thus requires that we adopt preventive measures aimed at meeting the many needs in relation to food, health, housing, drinking water, education, job training, employment, fair wages, productivity, competitiveness and access to opportunities. It also means that we must establish and strengthen democracy, good governance and respect for human rights.

We believe that in accordance with the wise distribution of competence established by the Charter, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council are the appropriate bodies to implement and coordinate efforts to tackle the structural causes of armed conflicts. The Security Council, for its part, has the task of what has been termed operational prevention, which is aimed at adopting measures with regard to an imminent crisis.

Nonetheless, it is impossible to establish an iron-clad distinction among which activities must be carried out by which organ. For this reason, my delegation advocates the utmost coordination and cooperation between the Security Council, on the one hand, and the Economic and Social Council and General Assembly, on the other.

The Secretary-General has indicated to us that the fundamental responsibility for conflict prevention rests with governments and local authorities. This principle is correct to the extent that the government and authorities are effective, responsible and democratic. Unfortunately, historical experience has taught us that in many cases it is the governments and political leaders themselves who fuel social tension and promote armed conflict.

The harmful circumstances of poverty, underdevelopment, ethnic differences, health problems, gender differences, or lack of educational opportunities in and of themselves do not produce armed conflicts. These structural factors can cause violence only if there are political leaders that are prepared to incite to violence those groups that are voicing their claims. In this respect, the presence of political leaders who are prepared to handle social complaints and demands by violent means with a view to satisfying selfish political and economic ambitions is the real cause of, and an inevitable catalyst of, social violence and armed conflicts.

Allow me to offer a few concrete examples. Both in the Great Lakes region and in the Balkans, it was the political leaders, in the governments and in the opposition, who fuelled and made negative use of ethnic differences in order to consolidate their respective power bases. The political leaders intentionally ignited ethnic violence as an instrument for promoting their corrupt objectives. The armed conflicts and the genocide that we witnessed were the premeditated creation of precisely those who had the responsibility to defend the population.

In Zaire and in Haiti, the armed conflicts resulted from the actions of hardened, corrupt, dictatorial governments that turned their backs on the civilian population and established violence as the norm of political discourse and squandered national resources. The governments themselves created the conditions for conflagration.

My delegation believes that the principal means of preventing armed conflict over the long term is to support and demand practices of good government, the rule of law, democracy, representative government and respect for human rights. We welcome the initiative of the Secretary-General to present to the Security Council periodic reports on potential threats to the peace. There is no doubt that this type of information will make it possible both for the Secretariat and for members of the Council to tackle the sources of conflict.

Nonetheless, we would recommend utmost prudence in this endeavour. Experience shows us that on some occasions, when international opinion is suddenly focused on a situation that is already tense,

the situation can become further destabilized, and it may be more difficult to find a peaceful way out of the crisis. In this respect, we believe that a careful, reserved and quiet exercise of preventive diplomacy may be preferable to public action by the Council. We must above all avoid allowing parties to a conflict from using the United Nations or the Security Council as a means to legitimize their claims or aspirations.

We are gratified to note the sending of fact-finding missions composed of permanent representatives of members of the Security Council. We recognize that on some occasions these can serve to convey important political messages. Nonetheless, we do believe that the scope of these missions must not be exaggerated. We wonder about the usefulness of a quick and superficial mission whose members are not experts in the region or experts regarding a specific conflict. For this reason my delegation would tend to favour in-depth investigative missions composed of real experts.

Furthermore, my delegation has serious doubts about the appropriateness of creating a new subsidiary body of the Security Council to study the subject of the prevention of armed conflicts. Our experience shows that the proliferation of Council committees reduces the Council's transparency, does not increase its effectiveness and limits its legitimacy.

In order to effectively prevent armed conflict the United Nations needs the firm and sustained support of all Member States. We must not forget the accusations levelled against us just a few months ago in the Brahimi report, which said that the failures of the Organization are the result of a lack of commitment on the part of Member States. For this reason, if we really want the United Nations to be capable of preventing conflicts, it is essential that we provide it with financial, operational and logistical resources that are commensurate with the magnitude of the task. If the Member States are not truly prepared to support the Organization, then they should not take on this new challenge.

The President: I thank the representative of Costa Rica for his kind words addressed to me, to my country and to Mr. Chowdhury.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 21 June 2001 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, which will be issued as document S/2001/616, and which reads as follows:

"I have the honour to request that, in accordance with its previous practice, the Security Council invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to participate in the meeting of the Security Council to be held today, Thursday, 21 June 2001, regarding the agenda item, 'Role of the Security Council in the prevention of armed conflicts'."

I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to participate in the current debate, in accordance with the rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to take the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Japan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Akasaka (Japan): First of all, I would like to welcome your presence here today, Mr. Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh, and the assumption of the presidency of the Security Council by your country.

I would like to thank you, Sir, for affording non-members of the Council the opportunity to express their views on this important subject. I would like also to convey my appreciation to the Secretary-General for issuing his long-awaited comprehensive report on the prevention of armed conflict (S/2001/574).

Since the last time the Security Council discussed this issue, we have witnessed growing international awareness of the importance of conflict prevention. I fully agree with the Secretary-General's view, as expressed in his report, that the time has come to translate the rhetoric of conflict prevention into concrete action.

Today I would like to offer Japan's preliminary comments on the roles of the Security Council and of the Secretariat in conflict prevention, on the understanding that we will have another opportunity to offer our views when the General Assembly takes up the same topic in mid-July.

First, let me speak of the role of the Security Council. We share the view that the Security Council needs to discuss cases of prevention on a continuous basis. As for the Council's efforts with regard to

preventive deployment, the dispatch of missions and new mechanisms suggested in the report, I would like to make the following comments.

On preventive deployment, the Secretary-General states in his report that past experience shows that preventive deployment can make a crucial contribution to conflict prevention. While we tend to concur with that statement, we consider it essential that the Council itself undertake a thorough appraisal and examination of its past preventive deployment efforts, such as the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force in Macedonia and the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic, taking into account what has happened since the departure of those missions. In that context, it should be noted that traditional peacekeeping missions, such as the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force and the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization in the Middle East, have prevented the recurrence of the conflicts in their respective areas of deployment. It should also be noted that a United Nations presence in East Timor after the departure of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor could be considered from that perspective.

Concerning the Security Council's fact-finding missions to regions at risk, my delegation agrees that such missions can be effective, particularly when deployed at the initial stages of a conflict. Before the Security Council decides to dispatch fact-finding missions in future, we would further like to see it identify concrete needs and clear objectives, based upon the assessment of the outcome of past missions. Clear criteria for sending such missions must be established; their terms of reference must be specified and their financing well clarified. In addition, the suggestion in the report of new mechanisms for the Security Council's discussion of prevention requires careful consideration, since these could duplicate the ongoing activities of the Secretariat.

Though the primary role in maintaining international peace and security lies with the Security Council, we believe that the Secretary-General and the Secretariat, with the flexibility they exercise through the dispatch of special representatives and envoys as well as through other measures, have a unique and important role to play in conflict prevention. We, therefore, support the ideas contained in the report for strengthening the Secretary-General's traditional roles in this area by, for example, increasing the use of interdisciplinary United Nations fact-finding and confidence-building missions in volatile areas, developing regional preventive strategies with relevant regional organizations and establishing an informal network of eminent persons for conflict prevention. All of those efforts, however, must be made in an appropriate manner and in accordance with the Secretary-General's mandate as derived from the relevant provisions of the Charter.

We also share the view that ad hoc groups of friends of the Secretary-General can be useful in supplementing the Secretary-General's conflict prevention activities. It is of course crucial that relevant countries, including those with the capacity to contribute to the conflict prevention efforts, be included in such groups of friends so as to ensure that they are truly effective in working out measures for conflict prevention. I would also like to emphasize that those groups should include representatives of the Bretton Woods institutions and other development-oriented organizations, as appropriate, in order to respond to economic requirements of the conflict-affected areas.

It is clear that effective conflict prevention will be an increasingly important area of United Nations endeavour in the years to come. Effective conflict prevention will require joint as well as independent actions, as the situation requires. Japan will continue to actively participate in conflict prevention efforts, as well as in efforts to devise an effective conflict prevention mechanism within the United Nations system, bearing in mind the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report.

The President: I thank the representative of Japan for the kind words he addressed to me and to my country.

The next speaker is the representative of India. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Pal (India): It is a particular pleasure, Sir, to see you back in New York and to speak to the Council under your presidency.

When the Secretary-General's report on conflict prevention was presented last week, and when a quick glance showed that much of it dealt with conflict management, the Secretariat said that this was because management prevented conflicts from escalating. In

that sense, though, peacekeeping prevents conflicts from being resumed, and, as it shades over into post-conflict peace-building, prevents conflicts from recurring. Conflict prevention would therefore stretch from early warning to post-bellum peace and development.

But if everything is conflict prevention, nothing is. It is much more sensible to see conflict as a disease of the body politic, and to follow the medical distinction among prophylaxis, cure and therapy. Conflict management and peacekeeping are the curative phase, post-conflict peace-building the therapeutic. This discussion should be on prophylaxis: on ways and means to prevent armed conflict from breaking out within societies and between them.

There are paragraphs in the report described as recommendations, some of them directed to the Council. But when the report was introduced last week, we were told that the Secretary-General was simply throwing up issues for discussion among Member States, not making recommendations. Today, of course, the Deputy Secretary-General has told us that these are indeed recommendations, but we would encourage the Council to see this meeting as a debate on the sections of the report that fall within its mandate, not as an exercise to accept or reject recommendations. We will speak in broad terms on principles that, followed by Member States or by the Council, could stop conflicts from breaking out.

Within societies, democracy is a must. Societies in which citizens can openly air their grievances; choose their governments in free, open elections; have a say, through elected local bodies, in aspects of governance that touch their daily lives the most; and get redress when they need it from an independent judiciary that upholds the rule of law, are far less likely to erupt into domestic conflict than those under totalitarian or military rule. The United Nations should continue to encourage democracy as a norm of governance that lessens the chances of conflict.

Between States, treaties must be honoured. Once States have accepted treaties designed to prevent conflict and to offer a route to the peaceful resolution of disputes, they must abide by their provisions. The League of Nations foundered when it looked the other way as bilateral treaties that had kept the peace were systematically subverted, and it was unable to prevent a global slide into conflict. Again, it was the experience of Europe in the inter-war years that totalitarian regimes brushed aside treaties negotiated by their democratic predecessors.

States must also accept and act on the norms of international law and on the principles adopted by the United Nations to guide relations between States. The founding principle of the United Nations is that disputes will be settled peacefully and patiently at the negotiating table, not through armed conflict. States must commit themselves wholeheartedly to this. Trying to undermine those with whom they have tensions, using covert force or terrorism, is not only cowardly; it is self-defeating. The United Nations should reject the specious argument that the knife in the back is the only weapon of the weak. That is not a plea accepted in a court of domestic law, and it should not be accepted here.

The International Court of Justice has a role in the peaceful settlement of disputes, defined by the Charter and the terms under which each Member of the United Nations has accepted its jurisdiction. But there are other judicial bodies, such as the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, which quietly settle disputes affecting vital economic and other interests that, in other eras, would have boiled over into conflict. While those bodies should be supported, the Council might wish to consider if the ad hoc tribunals it has set up, without any authority under the Charter, and which now cost about 10 per cent of the regular budget of the United Nations, have really helped to prevent conflict.

Conflicts are prevented if States are assured of their security and do not feel that they are under threat. Military alliances might give their members a sense of greater security, but history has shown that these alliances goad others into taking counter-measures, provoke tensions, and eventually lead to conflict. Most of the permanent members of the Council have, at one time or the other, belonged to powerful military alliances; some still do. They might wish to consider whether these alliances prevent conflict, when, during the cold war, they were the cause of tensions that threatened constantly to brim over into conflict.

Conflicts are provoked by States that have been encouraged into militarism. Conflicts are more likely if States believe they can profit from them. Conflicts have been encouraged by arms sold irresponsibly for profit, and conflicts have been both set off and sustained by arms races, often induced by military

alliances pursuing policies of balance of power. We need a fundamental review of the security of States in order to find genuine collective security at progressively lower levels of arms; only this will truly prevent conflict.

Nuclear war is clearly the conflict that must be prevented at all costs: de-alerting, no first use, and commitments not to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States are all practical steps that must be taken to reduce nuclear dangers. Nuclear disarmament must have the highest priority. Only a multilateral compact for the time-bound abolition of nuclear weapons will give the world true security. No theory or doctrine can justify the indefinite retention of nuclear weapons by the permanent members of the Council. If they cling to their weapons, others will follow, even if against their will.

At the other end of the spectrum, small arms and light weapons are what most conflicts are now fought with. Because these weapons are now both so lethal and so easily available, they have made terrorists and warlords immensely more powerful and deepened the vulnerability of Governments that have to counter them through means available to democracies. We were concerned, therefore, that the Firearms Protocol, recently negotiated in Vienna and adopted by the General Assembly, should have such wide exceptions to its scope. We will see what the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects next month comes up with, but Article 26 of the Charter also gives the Council a role in the regulation of armaments. Using it creatively, the Council could make it harder for terrorists and violent non-State actors to get access to weapons, and easier to take steps against their suppliers.

What the Council should not do, either under its elastic definition of security, or because it is lost in the emptiness of this report, is rush into areas where it has no role to play. HIV/AIDS should be a horrible example for the Council, which last year decided that it was a security problem and Blue Helmets a risk factor. The Council never explained how spreading this canard either helped the fight against AIDS or kept the peace, unless it was telling Governments that if they went to war, it would send them pox-riddled Blue Helmets to keep the peace afterwards, and felt this would be such a terrible threat that no State would dare breach the peace. Maybe this was what the Council did have in mind, because, after it adopted its resolution with much fanfare and an African State asked that peacekeepers sent to it by the United Nations be screened for HIV/AIDS, both Council and Secretariat, appalled that they should have been taken at their word, have been pressing it ever since not to insist.

With that, I hope, salutary reminder, I thank members for their attention.

The President: I thank the representative of India for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Egypt. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) *(spoke in Arabic)*: I am pleased, Sir, to express to you my deep satisfaction at seeing you preside, for the second time, over the work of the Security Council during Bangladesh's presidency of the Council. I am certain that the work done by the Council under your presidency will be successful.

A number of delegations that spoke before me have called for the General Assembly to continue to play the role entrusted to it by the Charter in the domain of conflict prevention. We find this approach relevant and believe it merits our support. In addition, we were pleased to hear that the President of the General Assembly will be organizing a similar debate next month on this very important issue. But, since I am speaking to the Security Council, I would like to submit a number of remarks regarding items in the Secretary-General's report that have attracted our attention and that I believe are important to refer to.

First of all, there are paragraphs 36, 37 and 39 and recommendation 3 regarding the Secretary-General presenting informal periodic reports to the Security Council and the formation of a subsidiary body of the Council perhaps for every situation, region or area that requires it. These are matters that are best, or should be best, approached with extreme caution and care. The dividing lines between what constitutes a threat to international peace and security and what falls within the scope or responsibility of a specific government are extremely fuzzy and obscure in many cases. On the other hand, determining the point at which the Security Council may or should intervene in a specific conflict that threatens international peace and security is a very complicated issue on which there may be many views and opinions. The Council should make a decision only if there is complete unanimity. I am not speaking here

about clear cases, such as those of foreign occupation, or clear violations, such as ethnic cleansing. Intervention by the Council in such cases is part and parcel of the responsibility entrusted to it under the Charter of the United Nations.

Secondly, the fact that the Secretary-General would enhance his traditional role in the prevention of conflicts is a matter that we welcome within the framework of checks and balances established by the Charter regarding his role and the responsibilities of the principal bodies and organs of the United Nations. We also welcome the report's statement that the work of the Secretary-General in the area of conflict prevention should be carried out in full cooperation with the concerned countries and parties. But we have a question about recommendation 9, regarding the enhancing of the traditional role of the Secretary-General in conflict prevention, in particular about improving the Secretariat's capacity and resource base for preventive action. We would like clarification from the Secretariat. What do they mean by this recommendation? Before concluding on this point, I would like to state that the confidence we have in the Secretary-General to choose the so-called network of eminent personalities and figures to help in the prevention of conflicts should not stop the Member States from having a role in determining the criteria by which these figures and personalities are to be selected.

Thirdly, we were extremely disappointed reading paragraphs 86 to 93, regarding disarmament. We have not found a single reference to any other kind of weapon that threatens international peace and security besides small weapons. While we fully understand the threat posed by these weapons to the security of communities, particularly in cases of intra-state civil strife and conflict, nevertheless the report should not have ignored the importance that many countries attach to achieving nuclear disarmament and to addressing the problems posed by other unconventional weapons, the existence of which threatens whole communities and societies. We call on the Secretary-General to correct this lapse as soon as possible.

We have a number of other comments on points in the report of the Secretary-General. We will deal with them in our statement to the General Assembly during the discussion of this issue.

Allow me before concluding, however, to refer to a lapse that surprised us. Paragraph 77 of the report gives a list of examples of areas in which there are missions supported by the Department of Political Affairs. Among these examples there is a reference to "the Occupied Territories". Our understanding of this reference is that it applies to the occupied Palestinian territories. If our understanding of this is correct, and this is most likely, we wonder how this lapse in referring to Palestine occurred in this context. Is this a deliberate error, despite the many different reviews to which such a report is subjected? We are posing this question to the Secretary-General in all seriousness so that he can rectify such error or lapse, and so that he can find out how such an important report could be issued with such an incomplete and truncated expression.

What we find positive about the Secretary-General's report is the proposed coordination between the principal bodies in the field of conflict prevention. We call on the Security Council to increase its coordination with the General Assembly, which has the more general and comprehensive role in the field of conflict prevention, and with the Economic and Social Council when required. The result should be one policy and one vision for the Organization in this very important field.

The President: I thank the representative of Egypt for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Mexico. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Navarrete (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation is delighted that you, Sir, are personally presiding over this open debate of the Security Council. I also wish to congratulate the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh for his conduct of the work of the Security Council during the present month. In particular, we are grateful for the convening of this meeting to examine the report of the Secretary-General on the prevention of armed conflicts.

The Charter of the United Nations refers to prevention in Article 1, when it points out that the first of its purposes is "to take effective . . . measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace". However, in the course of its history, the Organization has devoted itself remedying conflicts more than to preventing them. The change towards a culture of prevention, proposed by the Secretary-General, is even supported by popular wisdom; it is often said that an

ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. This change therefore helps to restore logic to the priorities of the Organization.

My delegation welcomes the report that is before us today. The importance of its numerous recommendations calls for careful analysis by delegations and Governments. We therefore appreciate the fact that the President of the General Assembly has scheduled plenary meetings next month to consider the report in depth. Today, I will limit myself to presenting some initial reflections.

The delegation of Mexico fully shares the Secretary-General's recommendation that the General Assembly make more active use of the powers bestowed upon it by the Charter. The General Assembly, the most democratic and universal organ of the United Nations, should recover the central role that the Charter assigns to it, as recognized by our heads of State and Government in the Millennium Declaration.

A first step to strengthen the coordination between the two organs would be, as suggested in the report, to increase the consultations between their two Presidents, not necessarily at fixed intervals, but rather, as often as the circumstances require. It becomes increasingly necessary to define clearly the sphere of competence of the Security Council vis-à-vis that of the General Assembly.

The role that the Security Council can play in conflict prevention is undoubtedly important, especially in implementing the provisions of Chapter VI of the Charter. However, for the United Nations to be successful in conflict prevention, more effective actions should be promoted through other bodies that are directly responsible, such as the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the specialized agencies of the system. One must wonder whether the Security Council has the structural capacity to launch major actions to address the root causes of conflicts and thus prevent their eruption. What it can undoubtedly do is to contribute to the prevention process in the areas within its mandate. It is self-evident that one of the most effective ways to prevent a conflict is to address the causes that can trigger it. If we bear in mind that poverty, discrimination and the lack of economic prospects are among the most recurrent causes of conflicts, it is not difficult to conclude that prevention-related topics and actions should be at the core of the General Assembly's and the Economic and Social Council's work.

Economic and social problems such as the ones I mentioned are not, of course, the only cause of conflicts. However, as long as the Organization does not strengthen its effectiveness in promoting development in all its aspects, it will not be possible to prevent the emergence of conflicts. In this regard, Member States should be responsible for providing reliable information on the progress achieved and the limitations faced in meeting the most pressing needs of their populations.

The role of the Bretton Woods institutions is of great importance for the prevention of conflicts inasmuch as they can help channel more resources towards the promotion of development. The protection of civilians must be understood in a broad sense, including the implementation of development programmes that ensure the well-being of populations.

Full respect for human rights and the fight against the scourge of drugs and against transnational organized crime also constitute fundamental pieces of a culture of peace. We must recognize that the consumption, traffic and production of drugs, as well as the crimes associated with this phenomenon, regrettably constitute an increasingly significant source of conflict. The recommendations of the Secretary-General to strengthen the work of the Organization in these fields are therefore correct and timely.

My delegation has taken note with particular interest of recommendations 14 and 15, on disarmament issues. The Government of Mexico considers that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery vehicles constitutes the main topic of the international disarmament agenda, because of its implications for international peace and security. The question of missiles should be the object of multilateral negotiation to establish an international legal framework conducive to the prevention of armed conflicts.

Mexico will continue encouraging the adoption of measures aimed at consolidating the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, including the universalization and full validity of the various international treaties on the matter, as well as the negotiation of new bilateral and multilateral agreements whose objective is the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, as a step towards the agreed goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

My country supports the recommendation of the Secretary-General that measures be adopted to prevent the misuse and illicit transfers of small weapons. The forthcoming United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects will provide an opportunity for the international community to adopt an effective programme of action to prevent, combat and eradicate their production and illicit traffic. Mexico is committed to the success of that Conference.

Fighting against impunity is a priority that the Government of Mexico fully shares. As does the Secretary-General in his report, we recognize the need to strengthen the action of the International Court of Justice and that the Statute of the International Criminal Court must soon enter into force.

As pointed out by the Secretary-General, most of the recommendations in his report have no financial implications. However, in the current situation my delegation is concerned by the proposal that prevention measures be financed from the regular budget. My delegation will participate in the debates that should take place on this question in the relevant organs of the General Assembly.

To conclude, I wish to commend the efforts of the Secretary-General to design and to promote a "culture of prevention", to which many have referred in the course of today's debate. We must all persevere in the task of transforming the United Nations into an Organization able to face successfully the challenges before it in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The President: I thank the representative of Mexico for the kind words he addressed to me and to Mr. Chowdhury.

The next speaker is the representative of Brazil. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Fonseca (Brazil): I join previous speakers in thanking the delegation of Bangladesh for organizing this open debate. It is a great honour to see you, Sir, the Foreign Minister of a truly peace-loving country, presiding over this meeting. Let me also convey our deepest appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive, thought-provoking and extremely useful report.

The strength of the ideals of the United Nations depends upon the identification of clear and feasible means to promote them. Without concrete tools of implementation the goals set in the Charter are empty words.

The report that we are analysing is rich in concrete proposals and concrete suggestions on actions that must be taken with the fundamental purpose of this Organization to prevent conflicts. We appreciate the able way in which the report identifies the main sources of concern of Member States and we hope that it can foster a renewed commitment towards a genuine culture of prevention.

The first merit of the report, in the view of my delegation, is the way in which it addresses conflict prevention as a cross-cutting issue. Indeed, the implementation of an effective strategy of prevention must involve the whole United Nations system, its main organs and all other relevant non-United Nations actors and stakeholders. Thus, improved coordination is indeed key to ensuring that we can harness and realize the potential for prevention that exists in activities undertaken by the Organization in a vast array of areas.

Conflict situations are far too complex to be dealt with just through a traditional security approach. It is not necessary to theorize about the distinctive nature of today's conflicts. Suffice it to glance at the recent involvement of the United Nations from Haiti to East Timor, Kosovo and Sierra Leone. The deployment of peacekeepers is only one of the tasks performed by the United Nations in today's conflicts. In all these regions, many United Nations agencies, funds and programmes provide a wide range of assistance, from short-term relief to long-term development efforts.

Success in solving one specific problem in conflict situations depends on tackling several other intertwined issues. To illustrate this, let me just ask a few simple questions. Is it possible to talk about durable peace in the midst of deprivation and extreme poverty? How can we expect fragile peace accords to hold when perpetrators of crimes against humanity go unpunished? What can be done to ensure stability if peace agreements are not followed by genuine institutional reforms to allow all citizens to take part in the political life of a country? How can United Nations troops help to disarm and demobilize warring parties if there is no programme to reintegrate ex-combatants into civil life? And if these ex-combatants are children, can we move forward without building schools and providing for the basic needs of families?

As we see it, conflict prevention involves not only the best possible use of measures at the disposal of the Security Council, but also efforts in the areas of humanitarian assistance, rehabilitation, reconstruction, post-conflict peace building and long-term development, which fall within the purviews of both the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. But when should conflict prevention start? Does it always demand the presence of the United Nations in the form of a peacekeeping operation?

Any empirical model for action by the United Nations should not overlook the fact that, in the real world, we are not faced solely with visible cases of conflict. There are also potentially deadly situations in what I would call the invisible or only partially visible conflicts that we can witness throughout the world. Paragraph 7 of the report is illuminating in alerting us to the root causes that may remain latent for years before a conflict breaks out. If we read it in a positive sense, we have a perfect description of what is meant by a "culture of prevention". Indeed, in a world where social inequities are being reduced, tolerance is being promoted and human rights are being defended, the culture of prevention will be firmly grounded. We know, however, that this ideal — which, in the end, coincides with the very goals of the Charter — is still distant. We should make our commitment to achieving this culture of prevention ever stronger.

If we are to fully accept the implications of the concept of conflict prevention, the most difficult and sensitive challenge is to prevent conflicts where the United Nations has not yet established a peacekeeping presence or a mandate. The difference of approach needed in these circumstances is enormous and should not be overlooked. As the report recognizes, there is very little the international community can do if, for instance, the Government concerned denies the existence of a situation of imminent normalcy disruption.

As the report indicates, the Security Council has a central role in the maintenance of international peace and security, but the shared responsibility of all actors referred to in the report can turn out to be the very guarantee of a successful strategy. The idea of regular joint meetings between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council remains valid and could prove to be an excellent tool of coordination. We are very glad to note that President Holkeri has picked up this proposal in the context of the exercise on the revitalization of the General Assembly. Working together in a cooperative manner must be the mainstay of our strategy for preventing the outbreak, escalation and recurrence of armed conflicts.

The United Nations has had a mixed record in its attempts to cope with the complexity of preventing armed conflict. Some ideas put forward in the report may serve the purpose of enhancing our collective performance in this field. Brazil is particularly supportive of such proposals as those on measures to promote coherence and coordination and on fact-finding and confidence-building missions as useful tools in dealing with not-so-evident pre-conflict situations.

Today's meeting of the Security Council and the plenary meeting of the General Assembly scheduled for mid-July certainly show that there is political will to address the issue of conflict prevention in a comprehensive and realistic way. We hope that the United Nations and all stakeholders will be able to ensure a meaningful follow-up to the recommendations put forward by the Secretary-General.

The President: I thank the representative of Brazil for his kind words addressed to me and to Mr. Chowdhury.

The next speaker is the representative of Malaysia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Yahya (Malaysia): At the outset, allow me to express my delegation's appreciation to you, Sir, and to the delegation of Bangladesh for convening this open meeting of the Security Council to revisit this very important subject of the prevention of armed conflict, which the Council deliberated in the month of July last year.

I should also like to commend the Secretary-General for his important report, which reviews the progress that has been achieved in developing the conflict-prevention capacity of the Organization. The report also contains specific recommendations on how the efforts of the United Nations system in this field could be further enhanced, which my delegation particularly welcomes. Much has been said, not only today, on this particular subject. My delegation's statement will be relatively brief, since we have addressed the issue in a substantive manner on previous occasions before the Council.

My delegation agrees on the need for the United Nations to embark on preventive diplomacy and preventive action as a far better and more cost-effective approach, financially as well as in human terms, than mounting any operation or activity after a conflict has erupted. We also agree on the need for greater coordination and cooperation on the part of the entire United Nations system in the area of conflict prevention, including ways of enhancing its interaction and, particularly in respect of the mobilization of resources, in developing long-term conflict-prevention and peace-building strategies.

Malaysia supports the efforts that the United Nations, regional, subregional and other international organizations have undertaken to make conflict prevention a priority. We are pleased to note that the Secretary-General continues to pursue these noble efforts alongside these organizations to further enhance a comprehensive approach by drawing on regional preventive strategies. Better coordination with these groups will only strengthen the capabilities of the United Nations, including the Security Council. More frequent contacts between the Council and the leaders of the regional and subregional organizations would provide useful opportunities to exchange information and examine situations in which preventive action might be deemed necessary and the involvement of the Security Council desirable.

In any meaningful discussion by this Council on the prevention of conflict, one cannot but also address the issue of the Middle East, especially the Palestinian question and the occupied territories, including Jerusalem. The plight of civilians caught in conflict in the area, particularly the Palestinian civilians, is pertinent to our discussion today. We are all aware that the conflict is the most protracted one since the establishment of this Organization, and the situation there demands an international presence, namely, the United Nations. It is a matter of deep regret to my delegation that earlier initiatives by the non-aligned members of the Council to prevent further conflict through the establishment of a United Nations monitoring force were not successful, resulting in an increasing number of deaths and injuries, mostly on the Palestinian side. We cannot turn a blind eye to instances of foreign occupation and the effect that such occupation has on regional and international peace and security. We strongly believe that the presence of a United Nations or international force to monitor the situation on the ground would have been a tangible manifestation of this Council's concern for conflict prevention. Malaysia once again urges the Council to give serious consideration to the establishment and dispatch of such a force.

My delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's intention to initiate a practice of providing periodic regional or subregional reports to the Security Council on threats to international peace and security. It is my delegation's earnest hope that in coming up with such periodic reports, the Secretary-General will continue to further consult the relevant regional or subregional groups that would be in the best position to provide the necessary information. We also believe that the Council will continue to benefit tremendously from timely and in-depth briefings by the Secretariat on potential conflict situations brought to the attention of the Council by the Secretary-General. To a certain extent, Member States with the capability to do so can assist the Secretariat through regular sharing of vital information pertaining to threats to peace and security; but this is, at best supplementary in nature and cannot replace the Secretariat's own independent means of information-gathering and analysis.

The activities just mentioned can be further expanded by the use of the Council's fact-finding missions. These missions, which vary in their purpose and objective, can indeed have important preventive effects. My delegation welcomes the suggestion made by the Secretary-General that these fact-finding missions could be further enhanced through multidisciplinary expert support so that all substantive areas could be incorporated into a comprehensive prevention strategy. We also support the Secretary-General's recommendation to set up expert working groups of the Council to monitor volatile situations and consider options to prevent the outbreak of violence. My delegation also agrees with the recommendation to expand the use of the Arria formula or other similar arrangements for informal discussions and exchanges of views outside or inside this Chamber. These arrangements have been used before.

My delegation concurs with the point made by the Secretary-General on page 3 of his report that "[t]he time has come to translate the rhetoric of conflict prevention into concrete action ... It is axiomatic that effective preventive action will require sustained political will and a long-term commitment of resources by Member States and the United Nations system as a

whole if a genuine culture of prevention is to take root in the international community." What is pertinent now is for the Council to act on these important ideas and proposals, lest it be accused of continued inaction on this important subject. Let us all hope that this latest report of Secretary-General as contained in document S/2001/574 will mark a beginning in that direction.

The President: I thank the representative of Malaysia for his kind words addressed to me and to Mr. Chowdhury.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Nigeria. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mbanefo (Nigeria): My delegation wishes to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of June. We are very happy to see you presiding over these deliberations today, and we wish you well. We have confidence in your ability and hereby wish to assure you of our support and cooperation. I also wish to express my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General not only for the very important and comprehensive report placed before us, but also for his tireless efforts for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Conflict prevention in all its ramifications refers primarily to measures that can be implemented before a dispute escalates into violence. It also refers to measures designed to counteract the spread of conflict to other areas. The basic premise of prevention, therefore, is that actions should be initiated at the earliest possible stage of a conflict. To be effective, preventive action should, among other things, address deep-rooted socio-economic, cultural, environmental, institutional, and other structural causes of conflicts.

According to the United Nations Charter, conflict prevention is a primary obligation of all Members. Although Article 24 of the Charter bestows on the Security Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, our experience has shown that the primary responsibility for conflict prevention rests mainly with national Governments, with civil society playing an important role. A successful conflict prevention strategy therefore will require the cooperation of all United Nations actors, including the Secretary-General, the International Court of Justice, United Nations agencies, offices, funds and programmes and the Bretton Woods institutions.

Although Article 24 of the Charter bestows on the Security Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, a successful conflict prevention strategy will require the cooperation of all, including the Secretary-General, the International Court of Justice and other United Nations agencies.

In the face of limited financial and human resources, and given the fact that it is more expensive to maintain a peace-keeping operation than to implement conflict prevention measures, the Nigerian delegation believes that there is a need for members of the international community to focus more on the development of a culture of conflict prevention. We should also focus on preventive investment instead of intervention in conflicts after many lives have been lost and much property destroyed.

We will urge the Secretary-General to continue the use of the tools of "quiet diplomacy," such as fact-finding and confidence-building missions, informal networks of eminent persons, mediation, conciliation and arbitration in his search for peace. My delegation supports the recommendation in the Secretary-General's report on the use of interdisciplinary fact-finding and confidence-building missions in volatile regions.

Considering the importance of the Secretariat to the success of the Office the Secretary-General in conflict prevention, adequate funds should be made available to the various departments to enable them to cope effectively with the complexities of today's conflicts. In particular, the Department of Political Affairs, which is the focal point for conflict prevention, should be provided with adequate resources and skilled manpower to enable it to discharge its responsibilities more effectively.

Considering the fact that the Security Council and the General Assembly have more than a symbolic role to play in the prevention of armed conflicts, my delegation endorses the recommendation contained in the Secretary-General's report to the effect that the General Assembly should make more effective use of its powers, as stipulated in Articles 10, 11 and 14 of the United Nations Charter.

In addition, my delegation endorses the recommendation that the Security Council should

consider the establishment of innovative mechanisms, such as a subsidiary organ or an ad hoc informal technical arrangement to stimulate the discussion of conflict prevention on a continuous basis.

The Nigerian delegation welcomes the recommendation to develop regional strategies that will involve regional actors in the resolution of conflicts. To this end, we appeal for financial and logistical assistance to regional organizations in order to enhance their effectiveness.

Conflict prevention and development that is sustainable and equitable are mutually reinforcing. Consequently, any investment in national and international conflict prevention efforts is an investment in sustainable development. We therefore call on the Economic and Social Council to pay more attention to the role of development in promoting long-term conflict prevention.

We also call on the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and other relevant United Nations agencies to address the issues of drugs and illicit trade in arms and natural resources emanating from conflict areas, because of their role in fuelling conflicts.

On the issue of human rights, the Nigerian delegation believes that both the short-term and long-term strategies for the prevention of armed conflicts must include a focus on strengthening respect for human rights and addressing core issues of human rights violations. We welcome the recommendation that the Security Council and the General Assembly should make use of information and analyses emanating from non-governmental organizations, particularly on human rights violations, in their deliberations on conflict situations.

We support the need to strengthen the International Court of Justice, and encourage the peaceful settlement of disputes, as stipulated in Article 2, paragraph 3, of the United Nations Charter. We also urge Member States to ratify or accede to human rights treaties and the Statute of the International Criminal Court.

In order to enhance the capacity of the United Nations for the prevention of armed conflicts, there is a need to strengthen the national capacity of Member States. My delegation therefore believes that if the various recommendations and measures highlighted in the Secretary-General's report are supported with the necessary resources, better results will be achieved.

Because of the role development plays in conflict prevention, we appeal to the international donor community to increase the flow of development assistance to developing countries, as we pray Member States to endeavour to implement the recommendations of the High-level Panel on Financing for Development.

In conclusion, while conflict prevention lies at the heart of the mandate of the United Nations, our achievements towards this end have been minimal. In spite of identified constraints, we must strive towards the achievement of our collective interest. The most promising approach for promoting the peaceful and just international order envisaged in the Charter is to build national and international capacity for long-term action to prevent armed conflict.

The President: I thank the representative of Nigeria for his statement and for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of South Africa. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Ms. Ndhlovu (South Africa): May we first take this opportunity to welcome you, Minister Azad, and to congratulate your country on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We congratulate you and your delegation on the excellent manner in which you have conducted the large volume of work in the Council thus far. We also wish to thank you for convening this meeting on a subject that we believe is central to the very existence of the United Nations. My delegation would also like to express our sincere gratitude to the Secretary-General for his excellent and comprehensive report, which guides our debate today.

It was through our determination to save humankind from the scourge of war and violent conflict that we founded this Organization. However, more than 50 years after the founding of the United Nations, peace among and within nations remains elusive. This is demonstrated by the multitude of crisis situations under consideration by this organ. These realities are a stark reminder of how far the United Nations has to move to realize its original principles, contained in Article 1 of the Charter, in which we

accept a duty "to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace".

Indeed, South Africa not only subscribes to the ideals of the United Nations Charter, but also, through its own history, knows very well the importance of searching for ways to avoid armed conflict and establish durable peace.

Our own experience has convinced us that the prevention of armed conflict requires the establishment of institutions of democratic governance, the rule of law and the protection of fundamental human rights, including the right to development. These values have also found greater acceptance among the leaders and the people of the African continent, as demonstrated by the adoption of a number of declarations that aim to highlight the interdependence of peace, democracy and development. However, our efforts to promote and institutionalize these values and principles will not be fully realized without an enabling international environment in which we can deal with the challenges of poverty and underdevelopment.

It is from that vantage point that my delegation would like to commend the Secretary-General on his efforts to create greater awareness of the need to develop a culture of prevention, not only among Member States but also among other important actors in the international arena. The report before the Council today is an important step in those ongoing efforts. Since the Secretary-General's report was issued only a few days ago, my delegation wishes to limit its intervention to a few preliminary remarks on those aspects that deal with the work of the Security Council.

In addition to Article 1, Chapter VI of the Charter places a moral and legal responsibility on the Security Council to play a key role in the prevention of armed conflict. Until recently, its approach had been to wait for conflicts to develop into violence and even war. The Security Council would then intervene through costly peacekeeping operations, which at times served only to freeze the conflict and which failed to address its root causes. My delegation therefore welcomes the recent trend for the Security Council to dispatch fact-finding missions to areas of conflict, such as the recent missions to Kosovo and to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the broader Great Lakes region. Those missions provide valuable impetus to local and regional peacemaking efforts and also provide the Council with valuable first-hand insight into the dynamics of a particular situation.

Recently the Secretary-General has also used an innovative mechanism, that of the inter-agency task forces, to create greater international awareness of the challenges confronting particular countries or regions in crisis. These task forces could play a valuable role complementary to that of the fact-finding missions of the Security Council, and consideration should therefore be given to the harmonization of the two approaches.

We support the recommendation of the Secretary-General that the Security Council should consider establishing innovative mechanisms such as an informal working group to discuss prevention cases on a continuing basis. Early warning inputs, including periodic regional or subregional reports from the Secretary-General, would be invaluable to such a working group. The Council could also, through the Arria formula, engage interested parties that might be able to provide valuable information and support with respect to preventing conflict. The Security Council could thus shift its activities much more into a proactive, preventive mode by enhancing its early warning capacity.

Undoubtedly, regional organizations have a crucial role to play in the prevention of armed conflict in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter. The efforts of the Organization of African Unity in the conflicts in the Comoros and between Ethiopia and Eritrea are a concrete demonstration of that role. We concur with the Secretary-General's assessment that the coordination of prevention efforts between the United Nations and regional organizations could benefit from a more targeted and substantive interaction. One area that comes to mind in that regard is the sharing of information and analysis on a particular situation. It is our view that there is a need for greater inclusion of regional perspectives in United Nations analysis of a particular conflict situation.

The Security Council should urgently focus on the practical steps that can be taken to become more proactive. The Council must demonstrate the political will to carry out its mandate in an equitable and consistent manner, and with greater determination. In that regard, it is also imperative that the Council's structure and working methods be reformed to be more equitably representative and to take account of the new

realities of complex conflict situations. A credible and effective Security Council is an important step in our collective search for sustainable peace.

The reality in many countries is that war and poverty feed on each other. My delegation therefore concurs with the assessment that meeting the challenge of sustainable peace and security in that context requires a multifaceted and comprehensive approach which addresses the root causes of conflict. As noted in the report of the Secretary-General, these challenges cannot be met by a single actor or entity but require the involvement of a wide range of actors, each with its own comparative advantage. The Security Council can certainly do its part by taking practical steps to ensure that we fully realize the vision we embraced in the preamble of the Charter of the United Nations and in the purposes and principles set out in its Chapter I.

The President: I thank the representative of South Africa for the kind words she addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Iraq. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Douri (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation wishes at the outset to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this public meeting of the Security Council on the prevention of armed conflict. We wish also to convey our appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his tireless efforts in this field, particularly as he works to move the United Nations from a culture of reacting to conflicts to a culture of preventing them before they erupt. We hope that the Council's deliberations will lead to the implementation of the ideas and conclusions set out in the report of the Secretary-General that is before the Council in document S/2001/574.

There is no doubt that the prevention of armed conflict lies at the core of the United Nations mandate. The clearest evidence of that is the fact that the first words of the United Nations Charter express a determination

> "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind".

The primary purpose of the United Nations is the maintenance of international peace and security. If international and regional conflicts were once a result of the cold-war climate that then prevailed, the past decade, which saw the end of the cold war, was marked by regional and civil strife that was more brutal, more tragic and more devastating than the conflicts of the cold-war era. It has claimed millions of victims, as well as giving rise to millions of displaced persons, refugees and disabled persons and massively draining economic and human resources.

The result has been the emergence of a single super-Power, which continues to give priority to its own interests only and to impose its hegemony on international relations, while attaching no importance to the principles and purposes of the Charter or to the norms of international law as these conflicts erupt and continue.

The Charter entrusts the General Assembly with a role in the maintenance of international peace and security and in the prevention and settlement of conflicts, particularly in Articles 10, 11 and 14 of the Charter. Yet the fact that the Security Council has expanded its mandate, thus exceeding the terms of reference of the General Assembly, has led to a diminished role and reduced competence of the Assembly. We would like, therefore, to reaffirm the importance we attach to the restoration of the role of the General Assembly and to the continued discharge of its responsibilities in accordance with the Charter. We hope that the discussions that are currently under way to reform and revitalize the role of the General Assembly, which are being conducted by the President of the Assembly, will lead to a reactivation of the role of the General Assembly in the area of the prevention of armed conflicts.

My delegation supports the expansion of the role of the Secretary-General in the prevention and settlement of conflicts, particularly since Article 99 of the Charter refers to this question. The Security Council, in this case, should encourage the initiatives proposed by the Secretary-General and refrain from any action that might cause him to fail in his task.

We would like to note here that, although the Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, it does not deal with areas of conflict in a balanced and objective manner. Indeed, it acts selectively, in the hegemonistic interests of some of its member States. Sometimes it acts quickly in a specific area; at other times, it prefers to procrastinate and prevaricate, despite the fact that the risks posed by the conflict in

question might be far greater than those posed by the one in which it took speedy action.

The international community is still unable to understand why the Security Council took no action in the Great Lakes region in Africa despite the many signs of imminent genocide. The genocide that occurred in April 1994 could have been prevented. The Council had many opportunities to deal with the question.

In this context, I would recall that one member of the Security Council – the United States of America – supported by the United Kingdom, endeavoured to stop the adoption by the Security Council of a resolution calling for the provision of protection to the unarmed and defenceless Palestinian people, who daily are facing, under Israeli occupation, the most brutal forms of torture and killing. Those two countries tend to tailor Security Council resolutions to suit their imperialistic interests. They continue to perpetrate acts of aggression on a daily basis against my country, Iraq, under the pretext of the so-called no-fly zones in northern and southern Iraq, which have no basis in relevant Security Council resolutions. Hundreds of innocent civilians have fallen victim to this continued aggression, and property and infrastructure continue to be destroyed.

The most recent of these acts of aggression was perpetrated by United States and British aircraft on 19 June 2001 in northern Iraq. Twenty-three children and young people were killed on a soccer field, and the Security Council did nothing, despite the fact that the Iraqi Government sends a letter every week to the Secretary-General and to the Security Council concerning these continued acts of aggression.

Conflict prevention must not depend on political and diplomatic necessities. Such measures will not succeed for long, because the real causes of the conflict will persist. Armed conflict is but a manifestation of hunger; poverty; underdevelopment, due to the plunder of the wealth of the countries of the South during the colonialist era and the resulting inequitable distribution of wealth between the countries of the South and those of the North; the continuing intervention of hegemonistic States in the internal affairs of other countries; restrictions on the political independence and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of certain countries; the pitting of certain countries against one another through religious, ethnic and racial disputes; and the starving of peoples through the application of sanctions, whether unilateral or under the auspices of the United Nations.

All of these are the real causes of armed conflict. If we do not deal with them, we have no hope of preventing such conflicts from erupting.

Finally, my delegation believes that it is imperative to expand and revitalize the role of the International Court of Justice and of regional and subregional organizations in order to resolve current problems and address their root causes, because we believe that those organizations have a very important and vital role to play in resolving the problems of their respective countries.

The President: I thank the representative of Iraq for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Pakistan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): First of all, Sir, let me say how happy we are to see you here once again, presiding over a meeting of the Security Council on a subject that is so vital and important to all of us. I should like to take this opportunity to compliment the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh, Ambassador Anwarul Karim Chowdhury, for conducting the affairs of the Council with remarkable ability and skill.

I will begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his report on the prevention of armed conflict. Although the report took some time to mature, we are pleased to note that the Secretaries-General of this world body have always shown personal interest in conflict prevention and dispute settlement. We laud the efforts of the present incumbent in this connection. We only hope that his good offices will also extend to those disputes that still remain before this Council, unresolved and outstanding. Two instances are worthy of his special attention because a lot of blood is flowing in these cases. These are Kashmir and Palestine. Both are cases of continued denial of the peoples' right to self-determination. Both caused wars and are still the scenes of armed conflicts between the struggling people and the occupation forces.

Now that the Secretary-General's re-election has been sealed thanks to the exemplary leadership that he provided to the United Nations, we hope he will have no hesitation in assuming a more proactive role to facilitate a peaceful solution of the two issues. For

modalities he does not need to await the final verdict on his report. Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter has enough relevant material for him to work with.

Now as to the report itself, well, there is much in it to be commended. We appreciate the seriousness of purpose with which the Secretary-General and his able team have worked on this report, and we compliment them. Much as one would like to go along with its contents, we cannot help but disagree with some of its basic premises and assumptions. There are some underlying contradictions.

For instance, we do not think that Member States and civil society alone have the primary responsibility for conflict prevention. While they may have some responsibility in cases of intra-State conflicts, this does not hold true for cases of inter-State conflicts. In instances where two or more Member States are involved, the ultimate responsibility rests with this intergovernmental world body, this being one of its obligations under the Charter.

Please note that the word "conflict" does not figure in the Charter even once, but this does not mean that the United Nations should absolve itself of the responsibilities assigned to it under both Chapters VI and VII for the pacific settlement of disputes and the maintenance of international peace and security. There is also no justification for selective implementation of the Security Council resolutions on the flimsy basis that some resolutions are more sacred than others because they carry the seal of Chapter VII. The Council should not act selectively or discriminate between regions and situations. It must implement all its resolutions and decisions.

If conflict prevention is the primary responsibility of national governments and civil society, then what is the *raison d'etre* of the United Nations? If that were the case, we would be turning to Amnesty International or perhaps the Ted Turner Foundation for intervention, rather than to this Council. But we do not, and this is because the United Nations and no other institution has the primary role in conflict prevention. And conflicts are prevented through the peaceful settlement of disputes. Neither conflicts nor disputes can be wished away. Closing eyes to them or shifting responsibility is no solution and will be of no service to this Organization.

The Secretary-General's report rightly states that the earlier a conflict-prone dispute is identified and addressed successfully, the less likely it is that the situation will deteriorate into violence. But a conflict can be addressed effectively and successfully only if this body, and in particular the Security Council, has the political will to do so. Too often this vital catalyst is conspicuous only by its absence, and too often good intentions have fallen victim to political expediency and power politics. As a result, disputes are allowed to fester and potentially dangerous situations allowed to explode. Bloody conflicts erupt and nations implode while the Council remains indifferent, like an ostrich with its head in the sand.

Even when the report tries to address potential conflicts, it has a tendency to confuse root causes of conflicts with their symptoms. Such misdiagnosis is often followed by a tendency to prescribe one set of medicines for all maladies. All potential future conflicts are assumed to be intra-State rather than both intra- and inter-State ones. All root causes are essentially described — I am referring to what was mentioned in the report — as economic and social, thereby ignoring the obvious political causes, which in fact are the real underlying reason for most conflicts and disputes.

A simple glance across the globe will show this reality. There is no social or economic genesis to the conflicts in Palestine or Kashmir. Both are a legacy of political injustice and a manifestation of ongoing repression. Similarly, the conflicts in the Balkans, the Horn of Africa and the African Great Lakes region cannot be attributed to social and economic causes alone. Poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy and poor governance are the symptoms, not the causes, of these conflicts. The underlying political reasons in all these cases are too well known. Hammering away at socio-economic factors is an oversimplification of the matter. There are other deeper and intractable causes of all major conflicts and disputes which the Secretary-General's report has not been able to address.

Only a couple of months ago, in a similar debate in this body, I spoke of the inability to address the root causes – political expediency, the lack of political will and the failure of the United Nations, especially the Security Council, to honour its Charter obligations – as the main reasons for two of the most persistent conflicts that have been afflicting our own region. Ironically, it is the dichotomy of approach on the part of the Council which is causing this situation. Kashmir and Afghanistan are the classic examples of selectivity. Selectivity on Kashmir is seen in the Council's total

inaction and inertia on its own resolutions and selectivity on Afghanistan is manifest in the excessive enactment of punitive measures and so-called smart sanctions, which have been hurting only the 25 million innocent people of Afghanistan. The fact is that, in both cases, conflict continues, peace remains elusive and human misery is being aggravated.

There should be no discrimination in the implementation of the resolutions of the Security Council on the basis of their adoption under Chapter VI or Chapter VII of the Charter. Such distinctions are irrelevant. Technicalities of this nature cannot be applied to a situation involving the destiny of a people or when there is a serious threat to the peace and security of a region. After all, both Chapter VI and Chapter VII are part of the same Charter.

Therefore, it will come as no surprise that we, who have seen the United Nations fail to prevent or resolve conflicts so close to us, will be sceptical about how it intends to prevent conflicts in the near or distant future. We feel that this report, in spite of some positive elements, offers no solution to the misery of millions of people in our region.

We appreciate the Secretary-General's sincere efforts to tackle this complex subject in his comprehensive report. The answer to many questions, in our view, still lies in the faithful implementation of the provisions contained in the United Nations own Charter. Some of the provisions in particular need to be highlighted. For example, paragraph 1 of Article 1 commits the United Nations to taking effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace. This gives the United Nations the lead role in conflict prevention. Under Chapter VI of the Charter, conflict prevention, as part of the pacific settlement of disputes, is established as a major function of the United Nations. Article 34 allows the Security Council to investigate situations which might lead to friction or dispute threatening international peace and security. Articles 36 and 37 lay out the responsibilities of the Council in preventing or resolving a dispute. The Secretary-General, under Article 99, also has a responsibility to bring to the notice of the Security Council any matter which may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security. This does not restrict the Secretary-General from using his good offices, fact-finding missions and personal envoys to prevent conflict. Article 29 of the Charter allows the establishment of subsidiary organs of the Security Council to assist it in its functions. Such mechanisms may be used to address conflict prevention on a continuing basis, as proposed in the Secretary-General's report.

While the Charter is clear on what needs to be done, the United Nations, including its Secretary-General, as well as the Security Council and the General Assembly, have to play their part in implementing these provisions. Not doing so on the basis of political expediency or mere technicalities would be a disservice to the Charter itself. We are hopeful that, when the General Assembly takes up this question, it will give substantive consideration to the report. In addition, in our opinion, the international community must be guided by certain broad parameters in its actions on the prevention of armed conflicts.

Pakistan will continue to remain actively involved in all the discussions in the United Nations on the prevention of armed conflict, an issue which is of vital concern to us. I wish to voice our support for the Secretary-General's pledge to move from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention, and finally to a culture of peace and prosperity, the twin goals of the United Nations. In doing so, I reaffirm Pakistan's cooperation and support for the international community's efforts to prevent armed conflicts, in keeping with our commitment to global peace, collective security and the honour and dignity of peoples all around the world, as well as their progress and prosperity.

The President: I thank the representative of Pakistan for his kinds words addressed to me and to Mr. Chowdhury.

The next speaker is the representative of Belarus. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Laptenok (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Allow me at the outset to welcome you, Sir, as President of the Security Council. We also welcome the initiative of Bangladesh to open this issue for general discussion. It complements the work done by your country and by the Non-Aligned Movement, of which Belarus is a member, in many other areas of international cooperation.

Like the more general question of protecting international security, the issues of preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention are becoming

increasingly universal. The political, economic, environmental, social, humanitarian, information and many other components of preventive activities are coming to the fore. Long ago, preventive diplomacy ceased to be a mere goal in response to the Charter tasks of the United Nations, and became a concrete, practical reality requiring joint efforts not only by the members of the Security Council but by all the States Members of the United Nations. It is obviously necessary to move from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention, as the Secretary-General puts it in his report.

Clearly, because of specialization in the work of the United Nations system, not all causes of conflict can be addressed by the Security Council. Other bodies in the United Nations system can make an equally useful, sometimes unique, contribution to the Council's work. We envision an overall pattern of interaction that would strictly adhere to the division of powers and competence among United Nations bodies. Some problems are common to the Security Council and to other bodies, and here we must identify a number of priorities: we need to design mechanisms for the timely definition of the modalities of interaction between the Security Council and other organs, including the dispatch of multi-task fact-finding missions, confidence-building missions and so forth. We think that here there can be a special role for mechanisms and models for interaction between the General Assembly and the Security Council, between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council and between the International Court of Justice and the Security Council, as well as interaction involving other bodies within the United Nations system with respect to specific conflict-prone regions. The basis for such interaction is to be found in the Charter and in other instruments to which previous speakers have referred.

We think it would significantly facilitate the Council's addressing of such questions in the context of preventive diplomacy to ensure the earliest possible detection of factors that could give rise to conflict situations; to create the conditions necessary for sustainable socio-economic development in countries subject to tension and in conflict-prone areas, with particular attention to Africa; to help make real progress in poverty eradication and in addressing problems of inequality and security; to put an end to all activities that threaten to cause the violent disintegration of States or to cause their boundaries to be redrawn; to halt the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons; and to ensure the sovereignty of States over their natural resources, which is particularly important for States in destabilized areas.

There is an important role for the revival of economic activity in areas suffering from slow development; in general, greater investment for sustainable development needs to be encouraged. More active use should be made of the resident coordinator system of the United Nations Development Programme in coordinating projects and in implementing social and economic development programmes in affected countries, all in close coordination with donor countries and with the local authorities. The international community should provide adequate resources to strengthen national and regional potential for conflict prevention. South-South cooperation should be encouraged. There is much else besides.

We feel that the problems caused by flows of refugees are a reason to supplement preventive diplomacy with comprehensive international programmes under United Nations auspices targeted at countries in destabilized areas. We also favour enhancing the role of United Nations civilian police contingents as an effective factor in preventing the escalation of conflicts, as well as in halting them.

For our part, we intend to make an active contribution to the work of the Security Council in this sphere.

The Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and other United Nations bodies cannot fail to address another destabilizing factor: the growing scale of terrorism. All States must pool their efforts with those of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to fight terrorism. That is a worthy common objective for the Security Council and for the whole family of organs and agencies of the United Nations system.

No less urgent from the standpoint of ensuring the proper conditions for stability and sustainable national development in a number of regions is the problem of combating HIV/AIDS. The work of physicians and other specialists operating in African countries, which are the most severely affected by this problem, is the focus of a great deal of attention not only in the affected countries themselves, but throughout the world. This will be the focus of the special session of the General Assembly to be held next week.

The orientation debates held by the Security Council have virtually turned the Council into a standing open-ended working group for discussion of the most urgent items on its agenda. But we need significant improvements in the apparatus for extracting the distillate from those debates: their practical outcome. This must be done through in-depth consideration of the views of States that participate in the discussions. We think that the Security Council should pay particular attention to that issue.

The President: I thank the representative of Belarus for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Nepal. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Bhattarai (Nepal): It is my particular honour to be speaking in this Chamber today, with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of a fellow South Asian country in the Chair. On behalf of the Government and the people of Nepal, Sir, I wish to congratulate you, your country, Bangladesh, and your able team here in New York, led by Ambassador Anwarul Karim Chowdhury, on your sterling service to the cause of least developed countries and of developing countries in general, and on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I congratulate you also on having so promptly organized this important open debate on the prevention of armed conflict. Allow me also to put on record our sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General, whose comprehensive and optimistic report on the subject of this debate is before the Council today.

Despite frequently being highly praised for its virtues, the prevention of armed conflict remains one of the least practised aspects of the pursuit of international peace and security. However, we note with encouragement that this situation seems to be changing for the better. While the Security Council is meeting today to consider the subject for the second time since last July, the Secretary-General has established by empirical evidence that prevention can be comparatively economical and cost-effective. That is in addition to saving lives, property, social constructs, the sense of common humanity and the environment for development.

What is alarming, though, is the Secretary-General's candid confession that, despite these great virtues, preventive strategies will not be easy to implement. The fear is that, once the policies and strategies for prevention are on the table, the political will and the commitment of resources required for their implementation may perhaps be lacking. Nevertheless, we must respond to the call of the day by moving forward, and forward we will move.

The maintenance of international peace and security is the primary responsibility and obligation of the United Nations. This duty demands that all appropriate measures be taken to prevent potential armed conflicts around the world, with full commitment to the principles of the political independence, sovereign equality and territorial integrity of all States. Failing this, the Organization will be unable fully to fulfil its purposes and principles under the Charter, according to which it seeks to maintain international peace and security and to promote socio-economic development, the rule of law, human rights and justice.

The sheer nature and magnitude of the work required to prevent potential conflicts speaks loud and clear: any effort that does not involve all actors at all levels and in all spheres will be incomplete at best and counterproductive at worst. The process must be comprehensive in its analysis and holistic in its approach. Therefore, although the Security Council is charged with the immediate responsibility of preventing armed conflicts, it cannot, and must not try to, do so alone. Given the multifaceted nature of the subject, the Council needs the full cooperation of all other principal organs, funds and programmes of the Organization, as well as that of many other partners outside the United Nations system.

An issue so wide in scope and so central to the core mandate of the United Nations cannot be dealt with on an ad hoc basis with bits and pieces of isolated efforts, and in an atmosphere lacking mutual trust and confidence. With the Security Council and the Secretary-General on the front lines, all principal organs of the United Nations must be fully and visibly taken on board. There should be absolutely no effort to undermine or subordinate any organ's contribution to, or involvement in, the process. For the sake of humanity, whose trust this Organization was created to keep, the entire United Nations system and its international partners must act together, in a synchronized manner, with full faith in the power of their ability to prevent armed conflicts. Based on this strong conviction, my delegation welcomes the efforts

of the Secretary-General to examine and analyse the potential roles of each principal organ of the United Nations, as well as those of other organizations and partners, to forge coordinated policies and strategies.

As the lead Organization in these global efforts, the United Nations must first of all strengthen its capability to support national Governments in conflict prevention. Interdepartmental coordination and inter-agency coherence need to be promoted and sustained. Interactions with relevant regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector must take place in order to achieve greater synergy and complementarity. All aspects, ranging from the role of the media to assistance for women and children, and from drug abuse, disease and crime to human rights and food security and disarmament programmes, need to be dealt with in tandem. A strategic analysis of the vast amount of information existing in the Organization and resulting from expert fact-finding missions may be of immense use in the process.

Peacekeeping has a distinct role in preventing the recurrence of conflicts. When armed conflicts erupt, the seed of deadly bitterness remains for a long time. The situation becomes sensitive to the smallest of provocations and susceptible to the recurrence of violence. While peacekeeping missions primarily seek to restore normalcy and keep peace, they also need to manage peace until a point of sustainability is reached, from where the relevant national Governments can take it up. Post-conflict peace management is crucial to ensure the continued solace of security to peoples in order to heal the wounds inflicted. Disarming combatants and reintegrating them into mainstream society to build a common future together is quite a daunting task. Indeed, the close involvement of troop-contributing countries is always a prerequisite for success.

There is clearly no better forum than the General Assembly to deal with the entire range of issues relevant to the prevention of conflicts. We are familiar with the usefulness of the Assembly's previous deliberations and its relevant resolutions on this issue. My delegation is particularly pleased by the fact that the President of the Millennium Assembly has already scheduled a general debate on the subject in the light of the report of the Secretary-General. We believe that this is the way it should be. My delegation also believes that the involvement of the Economic and Social Council in the process is equally urgent.

It is time for us seriously to embrace the suggestion of the Secretary-General that conflict prevention be made the cornerstone of collective security under the United Nations in the present century. This should involve a full understanding of the concepts of sustainable peace and security and sustainable development, and a close focus on the complex inter-linkages between these concepts and their building blocks, including social and economic development, democratization and the rule of law.

Let me hasten to add, however, that the premises on which we should base our principles and strategies should in no way fail to capture the essence of the existing inter-linkages of all elements involved. It is important that the Secretary-General has taken as a premise of his report that conflict prevention and sustainable and equitable development are mutually reinforcing activities. He elaborates on this idea by stating that an investment in national and international efforts for conflict prevention must be seen as a simultaneous investment in sustainable development, since the latter can best take place in an environment of sustainable peace.

My Government strongly believes that the reverse is equally true. Empirical evidence suggests that most of today's conflicts have erupted because of extreme poverty and the multiple problems associated with it. Sustainable and equitable development may be the only durable way to prevent such potential conflicts in future. We remain convinced that an investment in sustainable development must also be taken as a simultaneous investment in conflict prevention, and that the necessary additional resources should be ensured for the development of conflict-prone and very poor societies.

While the prevention of armed conflicts is a collective obligation of Member States, the United Nations must be prepared to assist national Governments in building their capacity in the area of conflict prevention. With the inter-linkages between poverty and conflict firmly established, there can be no better way to meet this obligation than to enable national Governments to eradicate poverty and improve the socio-economic standards of living of the ordinary people. We all know what unemployment and an empty stomach can do to people. My delegation believes that this is where the crucial role of the Economic and Social Council fits in. We hope that, in due course, the Economic and Social Council will also take up the call of the Secretary-General

to examine the question of addressing the root causes of conflict and the role of development in promoting long-term conflict prevention strategies. The contribution of the Bretton Woods institutions would also be invaluable in the process.

Nepal concurs with the view that the sooner preventive measures are taken, the more chances they stand of being effective, and it fully supports the concept of the culture of prevention that the Secretary-General envisages and the membership strives to achieve. We believe that the increased use of preventive deployment definitely serves this purpose. However, we are aware that a true culture of prevention demands long-term, arduous and often carefully planned and implemented policies and strategies. It is often outside the realm of short-term operational measures of prevention, instead involving long-term preventive measures of a structural nature. A preventive strategy, to be successful, requires complementary, cooperative and mutually reinforcing partnership roles among the principal organs of the United Nations, its system-wide funds and programmes, family-wide organizations and agencies, as well as all possible actors. We all have due roles to play in the consistent implementation of coherent measures.

The success of preventive measures is contingent upon the sustained political will of, and a long-term commitment of requisite resources from, all stakeholders. While my delegation appreciates the Secretary-General's determination to work towards building a culture of prevention within existing resources, insofar as possible, we remain convinced that an institutional strengthening of the key organs of the Organization, and their reorientation where necessary, would be crucial in strengthening the capacity of national Governments to prevent conflicts. We also encourage the Secretary-General to effectively pursue his good offices for the purpose of prevention of conflicts.

To conclude, we believe this fresh process towards creating a genuine culture of prevention faces us as a test of our true conviction, our political will and our sincerity of commitment to put in place the preventive measures and necessary resources commensurate with the root causes of all potential conflicts. For our part, we pledge our full support, and we would like to remain confident that the membership will survive this acid test before it is again too late.

The President: I thank the representative of Nepal for his kind words addressed to me and to Mr. Chowdhury.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset I would like to express our great pleasure at seeing you, Mr. Minister, preside over the deliberations of the Council as it debates this important subject. Also, I would like to take this opportunity to express our thanks and appreciation for the truthful and courageous positions taken by Bangladesh, a friendly country, during its membership in the Security Council, and the extraordinary effort made by the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations in this regard.

I would also like to express thanks to the Secretary-General and to welcome his tireless efforts to enhance the role of the United Nations in the prevention of armed conflicts and in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The United Nations in general and the Security Council in particular have a clear responsibility in the maintenance of international peace and security. From our perspective, this requires the promotion of a global environment that is anchored in the principles of respect for the Charter of the United Nations, the norms of international law and the resolutions of the United Nations, and the end of what has become known as the "culture of reaction". This also requires the enhancement of the principle of peace, anchored in justice and fairness and the right of peoples to self-determination, especially those who continue to languish under foreign occupation.

In this context we welcome all efforts aimed at promoting the roles of the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the International Court of Justice, as well as the role of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

I would like to make three specific remarks regarding the report of the Secretary-General, on the understanding that we shall make a more detailed statement before the General Assembly when it considers such report.

First, we have noticed for some time now that the reports of the Secretary-General and the Secretariat regarding the various aspects of armed conflicts, including this report under discussion today as well as reports issued earlier on the protection of civilians in armed conflicts and other documents, have all avoided — for reasons that we do not fully understand — addressing foreign occupation as being one aspect of armed conflict. These reports have also avoided specific reference to the Israeli military occupation of the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, as well as other Arab territories occupied since 1967.

Paragraph 77 of the report before us today refers to "Occupied Territories", but this is unclear, as if those territories belonged to the moon. Especially at this point in time, this lapse is unacceptable and difficult for us to understand, because the Israeli occupation and its illegitimate practices pose a threat to peace and security not only in the region, but also to the entire world.

Secondly, this tendency in the reports, whether by commission or omission, reflects a serious disregard for the imperatives of international law and international humanitarian law, as well as the permanent responsibility of the United Nations towards the question of Palestine. It is unacceptable that the question of foreign occupation and what it represents in terms of violations of principles of the United Nations Charter and international law, as well as the threat that it poses to international peace and security that falls within the responsibility of the United Nations – particularly the Security Council – should be left to the wishes and policies of occupying authorities.

Thirdly, the failure of the Security Council to play any meaningful role during the past nine months regarding the ongoing events in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, in the face of the oppression and brutality inflicted upon the Palestinians, and the failure to provide international protection for the Palestinian people, indeed represent a challenge to the credibility of the Security Council and its ability to fulfil its duties in a firm and consistent manner that is free of double standards.

The Security Council has, in fact, been prevented from fulfilling its obligations under the Charter, vis-à-vis the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem. This actually undermines the credibility of the Council regarding the prevention of armed conflicts and the achievement of peaceful resolutions of such conflicts. We, for our part, look forward to a rectification of this anomaly.

The President: I thank the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations for his kind words addressed to me, to Bangladesh and to Mr. Chowdhury.

We had a very substantive and focused discussion on the prevention of armed conflicts. I thank all participants for their constructive and extremely valuable contributions.

From the discussion that we had today, I find that the principles and recommendations presented by the Secretary-General have been received positively.

The Fourth High-level Meeting between the United Nations and the regional organizations in February marked a major step in strengthening cooperation on conflict prevention.

The momentum created by the release of the report and today's discussion should be maintained.

As for the Council's action, it is my understanding that members of the Council may continue its discussion of the recommendations within its competence. The Council will take an early decision on the recommendations specifically addressed to it.

The prevention of armed conflict is one of our primary obligations under the Charter. Let us live up to our solemn pledges to save the peoples of the United Nations from the scourge of war.

There are no further speakers on the list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on the agenda.

The Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 6.40 p.m.